No 24 March 1985

IMAGINE™

Adventure Games Magazine

£1.00

THIEVES!

* New spells
* New magic items
* But just as sneaky as ever....

For players of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game

IF ADVENTURE HAS A GAME, IT MUST BE INDIANA JONES™!

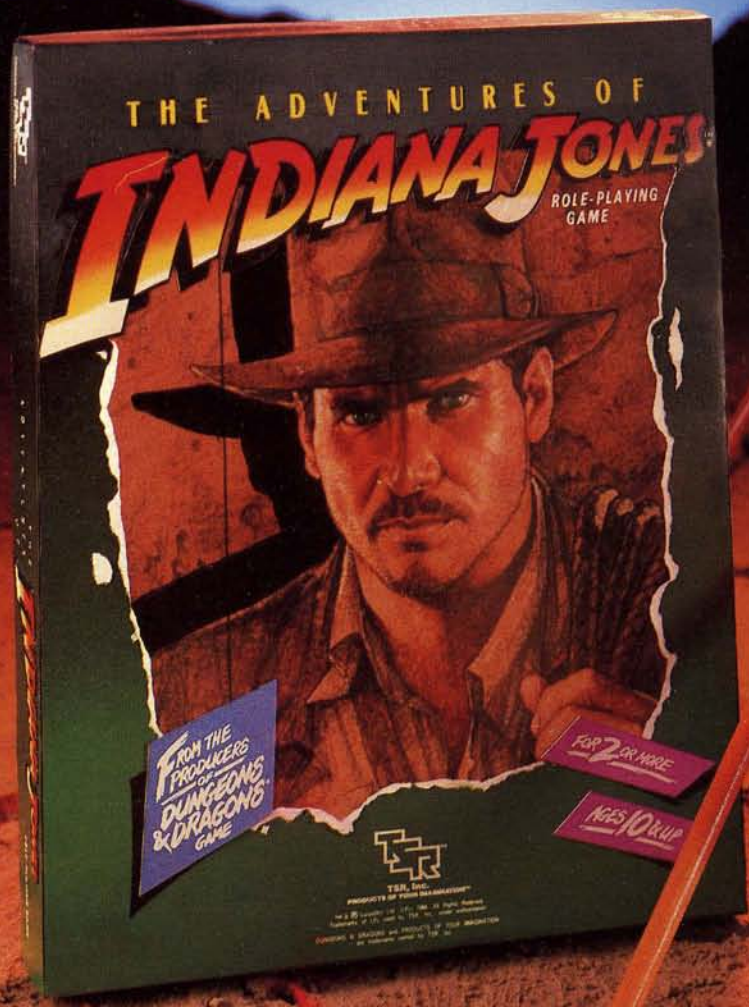
The hottest film of 1984 is now the hottest adventure game of 1984.

Now you can be part of the action, too! Search lost ruins for fabulous treasures! Recover stolen artifacts from foul Nazis! Or race through the jungle to escape hostile natives! You make the choices. Can INDIANA JONES™ survive? It's up to you!

THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES™* Role-Playing Game features stand-up figures, a rules booklet, adventure clues, special maps, Referee's Screen– everything you need to enjoy your own adventure.

Available now at all fine toy, hobby, and bookstores. From TSR, Inc., the producers of the world-famous DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Fantasy Role-Playing Game.

TSR™ TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™



™*THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES, game elements and character names and likenesses are trademarks of Lucasfilm Ltd. used under authorization. ©1984 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved.
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ©1984 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

IMAGINE™

Contents

Criminal Negligence, by Kerry Bateman
Thieves — a sneaky look at a disadvantaged character class 2

Thieves' Den, by Venetia Lee
Guilded refuge in the city 4

PELINORE — the IMAGINE™ magazine Campaign World
THIS MONTH: *The Bastion, by Paul Emsley* 11
plus *– Thieves, locks and doors in the City League* 13

All That Glistens, by Chris Felton
Confidence tricks to pull on the unsuspecting 17

How to Sell the Ponti Bridge, by Neil Gaiman
The easiest scam? Fiction to whet your taste for adventure 20

Guilty if Caught, by Flashman
A thief adventure for the **D&D®** game 25

An Open and Shut Case, by Chris Barlow
To pick a lock successfully, you need to know how to make one 34

Illuminations — news from the world of gaming 38

Micro game reviews 39

Notices — recent game releases examined by independent reviewers 42

Chain Mail, by Brian Creese
PBM games examined — waving the Chequered Flag 44

Game Company, Clubs 44

Dispel Confusion 45

Fantasy Media, by Colin Greenland
The latest on books, films and videos 47

Letters, this month extracts from your survey forms 48

VOP, by Ian Gibbs 49

Rubic of Moggedon 50

Stirge Corner, by Roger Musson 51

Soapbox — the hobby forum 52

Press Cuttings, edited by Mike Lewis
Full fanzine review coverage 52

Phalanx, by Robin Grenville-Evans 55

Editorial

'The fleeting years are slipping by,' to quote Horace.

It seems hardly possible, but **IMAGINE** ™ magazine is two years old with this issue. Looking back over the past 23 I can see that there have been quite a few changes and developments. We have learned a number of lessons, thanks to your letters and comments, and we will continue to produce new ideas to try out. It has been our aim to make each issue of the magazine better than the one before. This aim continues, and our efforts to meet your exacting standards will be zealously pursued.

I hope you will enjoy all the thievery in this issue. Maybe it will steal a few new readers. I'm sure we can all look forward to a continued growth in numbers, quality and content in the years ahead.

Keith Thomson

PS. Don't share this magazine with a friend — tell him to buy his own!

..... **IMAGINE magazine, No 24, March 1985** .....
..... Published by TSR UK Ltd ..... Publisher **Don Turnbull** .....
..... Editor **Keith Thomson** ..... Assistant Editor **Paul Cockburn** .....
..... Editorial Assistant **Kim Daniel** ..... Features Assistant **Mike Brunton** .....
..... Art **Phil Kaye** ..... Advertising **Lesley Hudson-Jessop** .....
..... News **Doug Cowie** .....
..... This month's contributing artists: **Robin Grenville Evans, Paul Ruiz, Ian Gibbs, Keith Cooper, Sarah Hocombe, Lee Sullivan, Mark O'Dell, Christian Holl** .....
..... Cover by **Ken Kelly** .....

IMAGINE™ magazine is published monthly by TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. Telephone: (0223) 212517. Telex: 818761.

IMAGINE magazine is available from all good hobby shops and newsagents. It is distributed through the newstrade by Seymour Press Ltd, 334 Brixton Road, LONDON SW9 7AG. It is also available direct from the publisher by individual subscription. The subscription rate is £12 for twelve issues.

Back issues of IMAGINE magazine, where still available, can be bought directly from the above address for the price of £1.00 + 50p p&p per order — in the UK only. Overseas please enquire separately. Payment must accompany all orders. If one or more issues in an order are out of print, a credit note will be substituted which may be exchanged for cash or merchandise from the publisher.

The issue of expiration for each subscription will be printed on the subscriber's mailing label. Changes of address must be notified to the publisher at least 30 days before the effective change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

All material published in IMAGINE magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher prior to publication, unless special arrangements are made to the contrary in writing.

IMAGINE magazine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork at all times. However, no submissions will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of sufficient size and postage. Under no circumstances will the publisher accept responsibility for any such submissions. Published material will be paid for.

IMAGINE is a trade mark owned by TSR UK Ltd.

All rights on the publication of this magazine are reserved, and nothing may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of the publisher.

Copyright © 1985 by TSR UK Ltd.

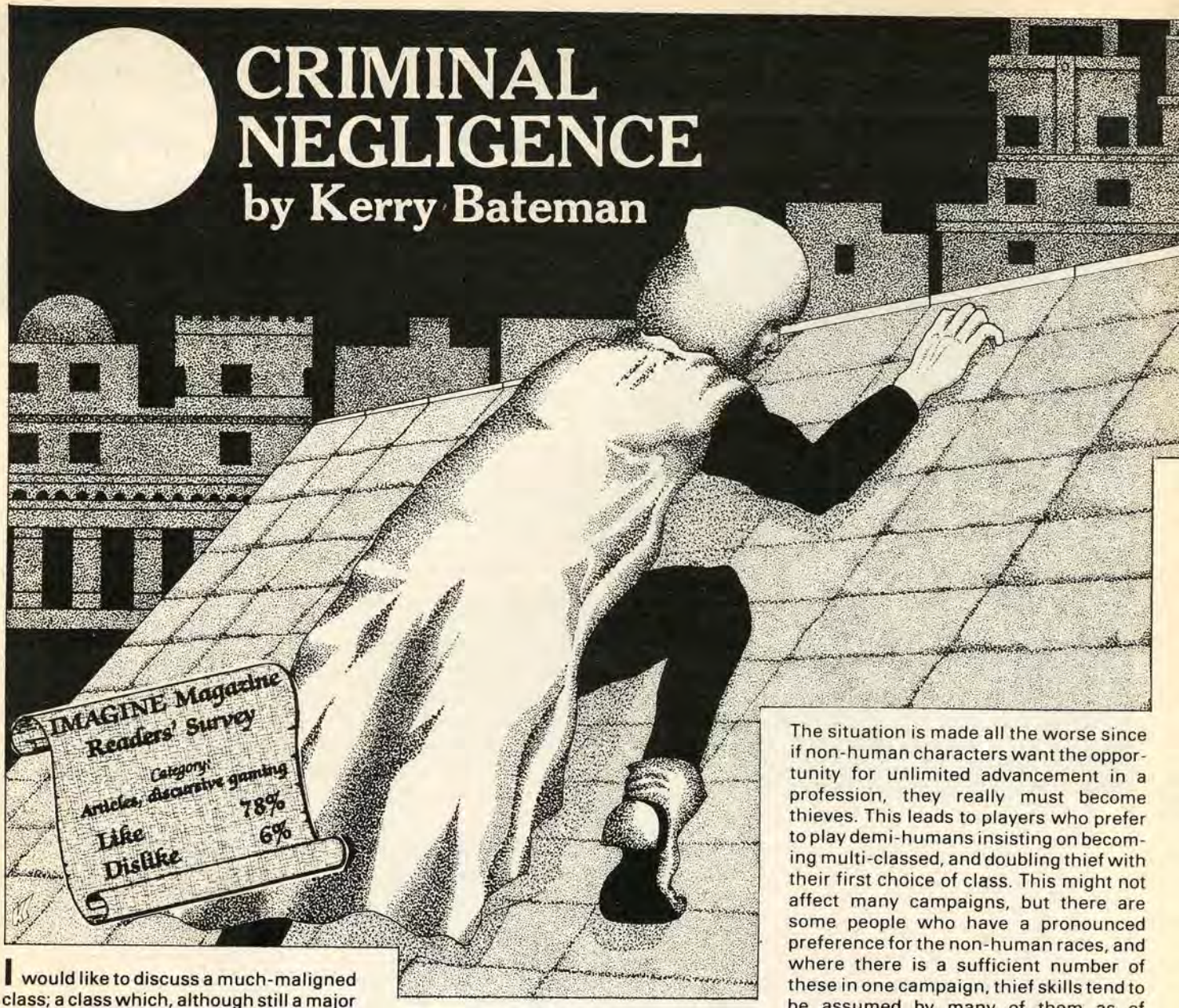
Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those held by the publisher.

Names printed in **bold** represent titles that may be protected by copyright legislation.

IMAGINE magazine gratefully acknowledges the support offered by its sister publication, DRAGON® magazine, published by TSR Inc, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, USA. Articles appearing in IMAGINE magazine may have appeared previously in that publication.

CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE

by Kerry Bateman



I would like to discuss a much-maligned class; a class which, although still a major force in the **Basic D&D®** game, is seen in **Advanced** to be hovering on the brink of extinction, a mere shadow of its former self.

I refer, of course, to the Thief.

It is the lamentable truth that in many campaigns the pure thief (as opposed to multi-class thieves or thief sub-classes) is becoming something of an anachronism. This trend seems very strange; the thief has many interesting and useful functions, requires a minimal amount of experience to advance in level and would appear to be the ideal class for players who prefer the use of cunning to that of muscle.

But a large number of these potential thief-players end up preferring other classes. Outlined below are some of the major reasons for this terrible state of affairs. Once these threats to the class are recognised for what they are, the process of restoring the thief to a rightful place can be commenced.

It is obvious that thieves are most at home in a town environment. But the game, as played by the majority of people today, includes only a small proportion of time spent in the town or city; it is a base for characters between adventures, a source of rest and additional equipment. When a thief adventures only in dungeons, that character is reduced to being a lock-picker, with no-one to steal from other than the rest of the party (the consequences of which are never beneficial to the character's chances of making the next level). In a wilderness campaign, the thief is even worse off; with no locks to pick or traps to disarm, no shadows to hide in, no need to move silently and no walls to climb, our hero is suddenly just a very weak fighter.

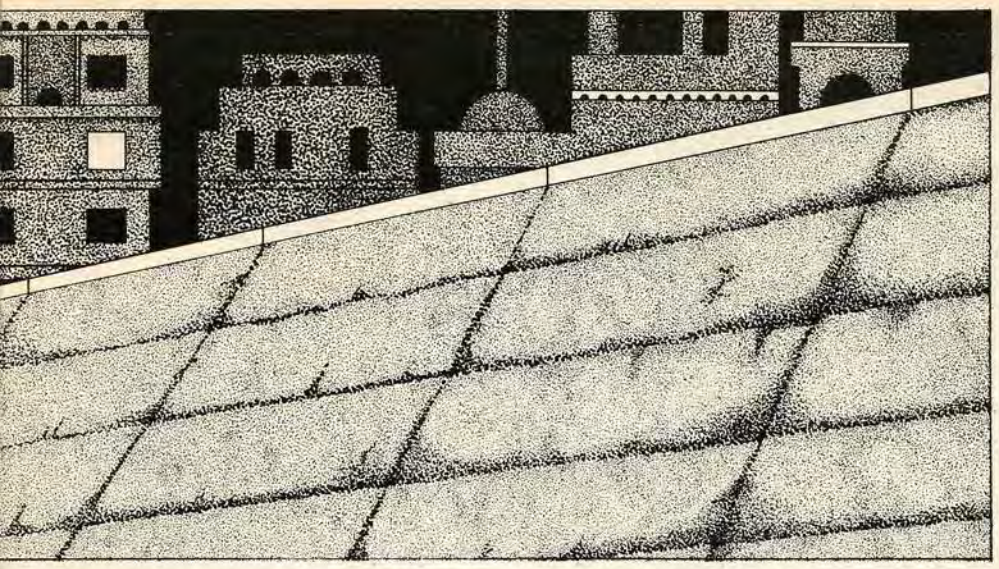
Another major difficulty affecting thieves is that far too many classes share their functions. Just considering the Official classes from the **Players Handbook**, you have Assassins, Monks and Bards, all with thieves' abilities in addition to their own more powerful functions. If you allow the numerous official and unofficial classes in addition to the original ones, you will notice that very few of these do not possess one or more of the thieves' abilities.

The situation is made all the worse since if non-human characters want the opportunity for unlimited advancement in a profession, they really must become thieves. This leads to players who prefer to play demi-humans insisting on becoming multi-classed, and doubling thief with their first choice of class. This might not affect many campaigns, but there are some people who have a pronounced preference for the non-human races, and where there is a sufficient number of these in one campaign, thief skills tend to be assumed by many of them as of secondary class.

These two factors mean that when someone in a group wants to play a pure thief (surely not an unreasonable request) he is put off the idea on the grounds that at least half the party can perform all the activities of that class already.

Another favourite complaint of these much-maligned individuals is "Why is it that us thieves, the most dextrous class there is, find that having just fiddled with the intricate mechanism of a needle trap, we get all ham-fisted using a bow?" This absolute restriction has no basis in the folklore that the game devolves from. Where would Robin Hood have been if he'd had to chuck darts at the Sheriff of Nottingham? You see the point; the romantic fantasy of the dying Robin exclaiming "Bury me where this lands" and heaving a dart out of the window into the moat is hardly poignant....

As they stand, thieves are extremely weak in combat, and limited in weaponry. The best reason I can think of for this prohibition is to encourage the use of stealth rather than force, or perhaps, like



the 'edged weapons' rule for clerics, there was an element of protecting the fighter class from encroachment. As the game stands, the thief and the cleric compare very well in combat, and the cleric has the advantages of spell resources and better hit points. There must be a case for dropping this rule, and letting Robin find a more dignified place to be buried, particularly if your playing group is going to take the advice from #20 and allow clerics to use swords where it is not contrary to the religious beliefs they follow.

Another prohibition, perhaps more justified, concerns armour. The restriction to leather armour would be fair enough if there were more magical leather to be found, but the chances seem to be very low, and it can be no better than +1 anyway. Equally unfair is the fact that whereas a Fighter/Magic User can wear plate, the Fighter/Thief is still restricted to leather. And it seems that in general, even compared to the fighter, the number of magical items available to the thief is very limited indeed.

The final insult, trivial though it might seem to many people, is to deny the thief the alignment of Chaotic Good, especially when Neutral Good is allowed. The 'likeable rogue' has been popular for centuries, from Shakespeare's Autolycus and Dickens' Artful Dodger right through to such modern heroes as Zaphod Beeblebrox, Han Solo and Aiken Drum. History has given us famous thieves like Robin Hood, the Scarlet Pimpernel and Dick Turpin. All of these characters would surely, in AD&D game terms, be CG thieves.

Some people might argue that you can be likeable and Chaotic Neutral, but for such characters, the good deeds which make them likeable would have to be greatly outweighed by acts of a more neutral nature if they are to avoid the change to CG and the loss of thieving status. Such a character is essentially schizophrenic, and as such, can never be trusted by friends and partners. This sort of character may as well be deemed insane and never have to worry about alignment!

Thieving is quite definitely anti-social, and although many people regard this as 'not good', it is surely a superb definition of Chaotic behaviour, ie, acting against the principles of an orderly society. The only Thieves' ability which is genuinely 'not good' is back-stabbing, which cannot be considered as an honourable course of action. But surely, in a world where killing is a way of life for other classes, stabbing an ogre in the back isn't so very different to a Neutral fighter cutting its head off from behind, or an MU fireballing the poor thing. If the act of killing evil creatures can be seen as good if the motive is pure, then a thief doing the same thing can surely not count as an opposingly-aligned action.

Having now identified most of the problems facing the thief, what can the concerned DM do?

First, it is worth considering the possibility of more town-based scenarios, or a greater emphasis on the time spent in towns between visits to the dungeons. Town adventures require more work on the part of the DM, but they can be more rewarding and enjoyable to referee, and they are extremely popular with most players.

The problem of other classes sharing the thieves' functions is extremely difficult to resolve. The thief subclasses, as such, seem to be entitled to use these abilities, yet each is more powerful than the original class. It's no good setting high ability score requirements to keep players out of a profession; if the desire to play the class is there, the DM is always going to find it difficult to adhere to the 'you-rolled-it-you-play-it' principle. The monk is the worst offender; it is an incredibly powerful class, and in addition, has all the thief abilities except Pick Pockets and Read Languages. The class could easily support the loss of, for instance, Open Locks and Find/Remove Traps, and it is well worth considering this sort of reduction in the power of all thief-related professions.

The number of multi-classed, non-human thieves is easily dealt with if the DM is prepared to go against the system's seemingly pointless 'humancentricity' and raise the limit on, say, Elven magic users, Gnome illusionists and Dwarven fighters. These changes will have very little actual effect on most campaigns, but the psychological effect on the player of knowing that his character has the chance to go a lot further is what is important. If you are not prepared to do this, you could go the other way and place level restrictions on all thieves except humans and halflings. Thieves' abilities are not easy to learn, and there is no reason why, for example, a Dwarf should not find fighting as easy as thieving.

Where weapons are concerned, I tend to allow Thieves to take either type of short bow as a weapon proficiency. A little rewriting of the combat tables brings the thief closer to the cleric in physical combat, and the inclusion of more and better magical leather armour in a campaign containing several thieves is also a good idea. It should also be a firm 'house rule' to say that multi-classed characters must abide by the least favourable armour restrictions for the chosen classes.

Try to think up a few magical items especially for thieves; gloves that improve Pick Pockets chances, or enchanted lock picks. And remember that amulets that detect traps or find treasure are going to be very useful during a campaign of housebreaking.

The issue of alignments must surely be the most controversial aspects of the D&D games, if only judging by the sheer weight of coverage received in this magazine recently. Most arguments stem from the widely differing definitions of Law, Chaos, Good and Evil. If you take Lawful behaviour as being unselfish actions that uphold the values of an ordered society, and Chaos as belief in an unordered society and actions normally directed towards selfish ends, then the career of the Thief might be seen as leaning more towards Chaos than Evil, which has more to do with slaughter and cruelty. It's a matter of taste, but you should not accept the alignment restrictions in the Players Handbook without considering just what a Thief is to be seen as in your campaign.

Certainly, it is always going to be difficult to justify a Lawful alignment, but I would tend to allow thieves to be Good, providing that they do not go around back-stabbing, or causing the suffering of others through the thievery they indulge in.

These alterations are, naturally, only suggestions. Many players may have evolved other methods for making the thief an attractive proposition, in which case I'm sure **IMAGINE™** magazine would like to hear from them. But let's not let the pure thief just disappear amidst the multi-classed elves and assassins — it really would be criminal negligence if we did.

Kerry Bateman

THIEVES' DEN

The City is the natural environment of the thief. Outlaws and robbers may have their lonely strongholds, but it's a hard life and in isolation they are vulnerable to attack. In the city there is a wide choice of victims, and if a mistake is made, the thief is sheltered by the crowds and dark alleys — to say nothing of family, neighbours and partners in crime. Thief player characters in the **AD&D®** and other role-playing games can feel under-used in the wilderness — although they are welcome in the odd dungeon bristling with traps — but expect to come into their own in conurbations.

Consequently, on arriving at a city, thief players may want the chance to shine as pickpockets or burglars — or, at least, to have some employment so their money doesn't run out. Whether a GM decides to run off-the-cuff encounters or design elaborate adventures for thieves, the task is made easier if the organisation of thieves in that city is understood.

Before the DM can start preparing this structure, however, an important and pretty fundamental decision is going to have to be made. Just what is a thief?

Other articles in this issue of the magazine will point to the fact that there are many varieties of thief, and many ways in which the profession itself can be accommodated into different societies. For the most part, this article is going to concentrate on the narrow, but not uncommon, view of the thief as a criminal; or at least as the character who is mostly likely to come into conflict with those with a vested interest in keeping what belongs to them. Some allowance will have to be made for those campaigns where the class operates in a different way.

THIEVES' GUILD — WHERE IS IT?

Players of AD&D and the readers of Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar series will be familiar with the idea of the Thieves' Guild as a building. However, most Guilds are not places but networks of mutual aid and exploitation. The Lankhmar Guild Hall is a fortress (disguised as an old mansion) with underground access all over the city. A large number of thieves is usually gathered there. Not unnaturally, the thieves in Lankhmar are a very powerful, organised force — but then they need to be. In rpgs where game balance ensures that other character classes are as strong as thieves (and, some would grouse, stronger) such a fortress would be very vulnerable to discovery and disastrous attack. A multi-focus organisation is much safer where the opposition is strong. Cities offer great opportunities to adopt a dispersed, cell-like organisation so that eradication of one branch leaves others untouched. In this case the guild will not be encountered en masse. The contacts for the thief PC may be city-wide and constantly changing. Returning to the city after an adventure, it may take some time to find the new location where the thief may train and even longer to track down a buyer for certain valuables.

WHO IS IN THE THIEVES' GUILD?

Any Thieves' Guild worth its salt tries to ensure that all thieves operating within its environs are members. However, membership could be extended to include anyone concerned with things that don't belong to them — from fences of stolen goods to fighter/muggers. In most circumstances, these 'associate' members would not be privy to the inner workings of the guild.

Child Thieves

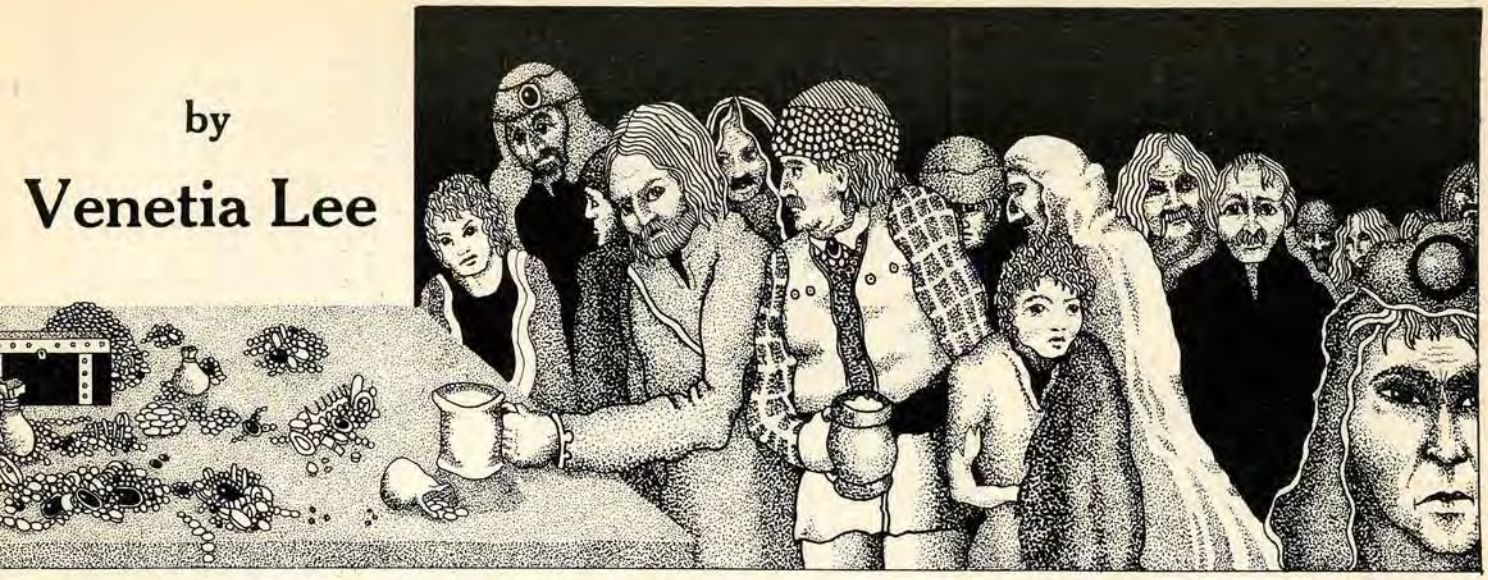
As our own history shows us, children make excellent thieves and should comprise a large part of the lower echelons of the guild. Many of them will be exploited by adults, often treated cruelly, gaining little benefit beyond inadequate shelter and food. Their masters alone profit from the sale of stolen goods (most children could not spend a lot of money nor sell many things without arousing suspicion). A few could become successful and keep their ill-gotten wealth out of the hands of adults — at least for a while. In Regency London such were known disparagingly as 'flash kiddies' — swaggering in stolen finery. Robbing them was considered a great sport. The mortality rate of young thieves will be high — especially as so many start out deprived — as they succumb to starvation, disease, incarceration, punishment and murder. In some societies destitute children may be saved by philanthropists; a few guilds may endeavour to care for the welfare of young recruits — in general only those who are clever, lucky or protected by adults survive.

Young thieves usually work at the instigation of a fence who may supply them with lodgings. Consequently they will tend to specialize according to the needs of their employer — stealing only handkerchiefs or brass door-knockers, for example. Since exploitation of the young will always tend to be the province of the criminal elements of a society, it will be rare for young thieves to be engaged in more lawful pursuits. If they look promising, they could be trained by experienced criminals, learning a wider range of skills.

It could be amusing to encumber a player-character with a fourteen year old to instruct. In AD&D game terms, a young purse-snatcher may have learned the skills of a 0-level thief (see #17 article, **What To Do With A Dragon's Treasure**) in picking pockets and moving silently.

by

Venetia Lee



Recruited into housebreaking, she learns full 0-level rates in all the other thieving skills. She may then gain more experience and training to 1st level. It may be argued that, due to intrinsic physical advantages of small size and natural deftness (which are not skills), children are better adapted to thieving than adults. Therefore they should have additions to some basic skills until adolescence, for example +10% on picking pockets, moving silently, hiding in shadows and hear noise. This could cause problems in AD&D as a 0-level child could be better than a 1st level adult — but so can a 0-level halfling. The difference is that until the age of nineteen — when they have settled down mentally and physically — they cannot gain experience points or progress beyond 1st level. Also, on reaching adolescence, these 'youth' bonuses will have to be removed. In role-playing systems where skills are not learned as a 'package' it is easier to imagine them acquired at different times and rates.

Non-Thieves

Some child thieves may grow up to have more talent as fighters or spellcasters. Such may retain their interest in their profession, but refuse to behave in an evil or selfish way, while others, maybe not through choice, could remain useful members of the guild. Of course, anyone developing a taste for other peoples' property at any time of their lives is liable to be recruited by the guild. A nasty thing to do to players is to blackmail them with the information that they were forced to thieve in youth.

The relationship between clerical associations and the Thieves' Guild is liable to be a thorny one. The details of the arrangement vary depending on the deity worshipped, and split loyalties are a considerable problem. In the AD&D game, at least, the relative power of the gods and their followers makes it essential for the guild to be in close association with at least one temple. One might expect to find clerical members of Thieves' Guilds with a good deal of personal autonomy and control over Guild activities.

Hidden Thieves

A thief may adopt a profession or a business as a cover, but the advantage of this goes beyond concealment of identity. The writer Samuel R Delany puts this most succinctly in **Time Considered As A Helix Of Semi-Precious Stones** when he has one thief advise another:

> *"If you're going to move into the big time you have to have at least one foot firmly planted on the right side of the law. The whole idea is to make yourself indispensible to the good people; once that's done, a good crook has the keys to all the treasure houses in the system."*

Where a campaign follows the maxim from the **Players Handbook** that "the profession of thief is not dishonourable", it might be felt that thieves could operate openly, without needing a 'cover'. However, even in such cases there is an advantage for the thief with the right contacts. Two examples to illustrate this:

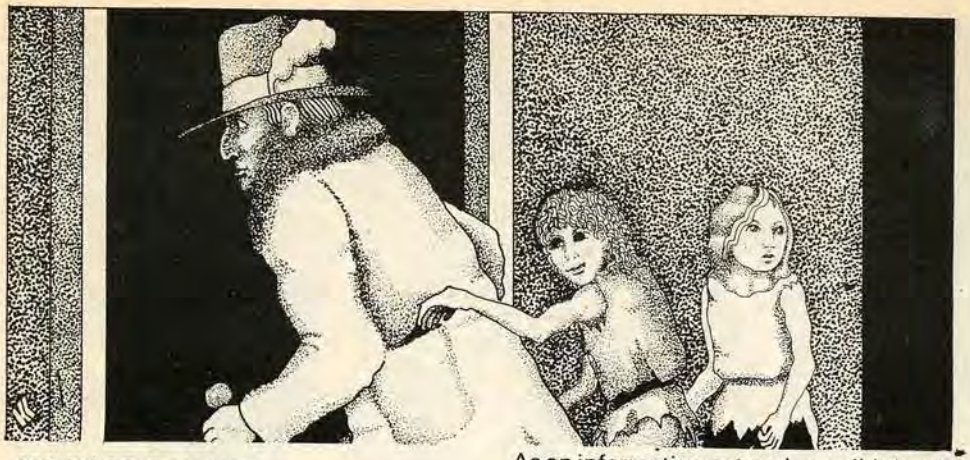
Alfie the half-orc is as little known for his hard work as his charm. When the militia pick him up out of the gutter with silver in his pockets, their response is a rather thorough investigation. This quickly reveals the source of his wealth and Alfie is in trouble again. On the other hand, Imelda the Cloth Merchant is a pillar of respectability (albeit from humble beginnings), well-entrenched in mercantile social and commercial life. She is also the head of an extensive smuggling operation. Through underlings, she has involved many outwardly respectable people in buying stolen goods. She has, of course, dispensed bribes in all the appropriate places. If all else fails the officials of law and order are kept at bay by her various influential acquaintances. There will be genuinely good people who believe Imelda to be like themselves, as well as those who are afraid of what any investigation into smuggling may reveal of their own involvement. It would be very frustrating for a player with strong suspicions that such a person has defrauded them to meet with complete lack of interest from the authorities.

Open Thieves

In some districts — and sometimes in entire cities — thieves may have successfully broken the forces of law and order, or perhaps even replaced it with an 'order' of their own devising. In this case, secure from retribution and protected by bribery, fear or comradeship, they can outwardly flaunt their profession. Usually, such thieves would be well-armed, ostentatiously wealthy and all this on no visible means of income at all (do some magic-user-thieves live off their invisible earnings?). Where the laws of the land allow the rich to exploit the poor unfairly, thieves can easily become popular heroes, and where they do not steal from neighbours but help them, they may be well-loved. Revolutionary outlaws like Robin Hood are of this type. They may be intent on imposing themselves as the strongest force in a run-down area. A few may aim a little higher and move in high society; well-dressed and well connected, they amuse their aristocratic friends so long as they are not caught red-handed.

Some communities take an indulgent view of thievery — they admonish rather than admire or denigrate them. Hence, after Bungle Hairfoot has been to stay with his cousin, Longnose, he receives a polite little note asking him to come again — and please bring back the spoons he borrowed. In such places few thieves trouble to make a big secret of their profession. Other open thieves are actually respectable. They are known to use their talents only in good causes.

Finally, the most visible guild members of all are the street gangs. A typical gang will consist of fighters as well as thieves, ranging between mid-adolescence and the mid-twenties in age. They will have a conspicuous, frightening prescence on the streets and never be out of trouble — with the law, or their fellows. Firmly in the lower echelons of the guild, they make their money through pickpocketing, mugging and collecting information. The latter function will be important to players as they are relatively easy to find and hire — provided it is possible to gain and keep their respect.



WHY IS THERE A THIEVES' GUILD?

When Alfie the half-orc hands over 10% to Matt the 'tithe collector', he wonders what's in it for him. "Just a protection racket, this," he mutters and cops a 5% surcharge for insolence. The benefits of the guild are very obvious to the leaders, but just what are they?

First and foremost, a guild is all about the passing on of skills and traditions from one generation to the next. The Thieves' Guild is in a slightly ambiguous position, in that officers of that guild are not going to pass on skills which might be used to rob them later! But then, one would not expect a successful baker to pass on all his superior knowledge to a potential competitor. Far beyond the question of training thieves to enhance their skills, the Guild will be responsible for the organisation of tradition. Certain actions will be forbidden, certain houses or individuals will be deemed inviolate; the guild will show how the profession of thief is to be conducted in a moral as well as a physical sense.

The second function of a guild — equally important in those places where crime is an organised institution — will be the acquisition of the profits of crime. This can be translated as the rakeoff for the leaders. Most of this will disappear into a few selected pockets, but the Guild Masters may have to spend some on the guild's third function — the frustration of law and order. This may be bribing a jailor to let someone escape or a magistrate to be lenient, but control can be established more subtly by discrediting an over-eager judge, ensuring that maintenance work on the prison isn't carried out properly or encouraging the watch to spend cold nights in the alehouse. In general the tithes will be spread among the guild's hierarchy and will not be available for the individual needs of lesser thieves (unless they are close to the leadership), who will have to take what benefit they can from the guild's activities. It may be possible in some guilds to lodge funds with a trustee (probably a fence) to be used for bribes, etc, in need; but normally a thief must rely on friends and co-conspirators to organise aid. Of course, obligations can be reneged on but this will earn a bad reputation. You can only fool people in this way once.

As an information network, a guild should efficiently disseminate news of use to everyone. However, some knowledge will travel in very restricted circles indeed. Never underestimate the earning power of the right piece of information.

Guild leaders use lower level and subordinate thieves to bring in cash and as a pool of workers and informants for their private schemes. The head of a network of organised crime is entitled to very high ambitions and has the power to carry them out.

DESIGNING A THIEVES' GUILD

The conditions of life in the city need to be taken into account when designing a thieves' guild. The following factors are relevant:

1. The relative power of law enforcement organizations and the guild. This has many ramifications. Not only does it have an effect on the way the Guild as an institution conducts its affairs, but the DM will also have to be aware of it when designing Guildhouses. The architecture of the buildings might be designed to keep people out, but is it also good for allowing people to escape when the defences are overcome?

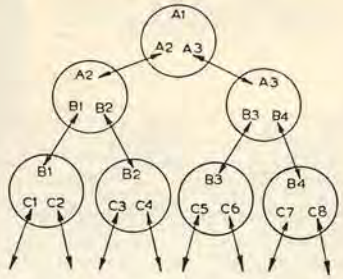
2. The prevailing religious or ethical attitude toward crime and punishment. Thieves may be vilified or admired by people at all levels of society. Theft may not be taken very seriously in communities which worship gods who have no interest in property. Thieves may even be heroes to the oppressed when they concentrate on robbing the oppressors.

3. The level of corruption in the city. How far are thieves involved in business or social life and how much control have they over law enforcers?

4. The relationship of thieves to the economy. Thieving may be necessary to the survival of individuals or even whole communities and some great business fortunes may be founded on illegality.

5. The alignment of the leading thieves. This needs to integrate with point '2'.

Having taken account of these factors (and any more you may think relevant), plan the hierarchy and information network of the guild. Bear in mind that, if the organization must be secretive, a cell-like structure may be adopted. The traditional cell structure is illustrated in the following diagram:



In a truly secret organisation, members only know others in their cells as fellow conspirators. In a thieves' guild many thieves can be more or less open about their profession and may associate in large groups. Therefore this kind of secrecy will be most common at the top and often concern deeds rather than identities — everyone will know who is a thief and who isn't, but there would be few who knew anything specific about the activities of the thieving class. Any secret information could be profitably disseminated through the cell network The apparent ranking of the system will not mirror the actual hierarchy of the guild. For example, assuming that Guildleader Cassandra is 'A1' in the cell diagram, she would not want her lines of communication to go through her second and third in command — leaving her vulnerable for censorship and conspiracy. It may be possible for her to conceal her rank and appear in an additional, lower cell to minimize isolation. At low levels the cell system is liable to become informal — for example street gangs would form very large cells.

As a rough guide to the number of people involved in a thieves' guild and its peripheries, consider 5-15% of the population of any city to be in some way connected to the thieving classes. This figure was derived from that given for 19th century London — a lawless place with no effective police force — where the figure was 10% in a population of one million. Of these the majority were small fry — child pickpockets or adults receiving stolen goods — only about one in twenty were of the burgling 'elite'. 15% is more likely in a place such as Lankhmar, which is more depraved than any actual place.

It should not be necessary, when designing, to map out every detail of the guild network. Only one branch is needed for interaction with player characters — indeed in its own interests of secrecy it would ensure that this was so.

A variety of meeting places are needed and some of these must be exclusive to thieves. These will include certain taverns, more classy private clubs, secret, underground complexes, and residences

run by fences and gang leaders for lower level thieves. Of the places open to non-thieves, some will be dangerous — patronized only by people who can take care of themselves. Others will be safe for anyone — although they may be socially exclusive. Again these include not only inns but also theatres, gymnasia and even temples. At such places thieves pick up gossip, employment, valuable contacts (even friends) and, of course, victims. The non-thieves may be looking for employees, a source of cheap goods or things they have 'lost'. A few may enjoy the vicarious glamour of associating with criminals.

MAGIC

The existence of magic in a role-playing game brings a new aspect to thieves' activities. The potential of various spells to disrupt security systems will provoke counter measures by society and the individual. In most cities the authorities will seek to control the use of magic with laws and licensing; although just how they will enforce the laws they make is another matter. Magic users will resist this but, as a body, they will have to curb illegal and immoral use of spells to safeguard their own reputations (after all, some places have had cause to ban magic altogether).

Some of the spells available in the AD&D game may be considered as illustration:

1. Mental Assault: In this category are **charm person, suggestion** and **friends** — where magic is used to influence behaviour — and **ESP, clairvoyance** and **clairaudience** — which invade privacy. All of these will probably be illegal, except by the authorities' own practitioners, even when casting doesn't lead to any more laws being broken. Use in serious crime, such as seduction by **charm**, will carry a severe penalty. To counteract the effectiveness of **charm**, a merchant's association may employ a cleric to make spot checks on guards and other workers with a **detect charm** spell — and thorough checks when a serious crime is commited (any thieves apprehended may also be examined).

Spells such as **know alignment** may be very useful to those in authority. However, in many places they may be illegal, except when a person consents or has been convicted of a serious crime, as they can be considered a violation of privacy. As always, the honest citizens who refuse such tests are joined in their indignation by powerful persons who do not want their intentions known to some meddlesome priests.

2. Going Equipped for Robbery: Some spells have such a clear application for crime — **invisibility, polymorph self,** perhaps **fly** — that they may only be used under strict license. Various measures may be adopted to discover infringements — substances which show up footprints, bead curtains in doorways or guard animals with a keen sense of smell — but none of these are very useful against the flying, invisible criminal. The most effective means of detection is magic itself. Spot checks with **detect magic** and **detect invisible** spells, magic items or magical creatures will be a widespread part of efforts to defeat the criminal element.

3. Rendering Unconscious: Sleep and **colour spray** are favoured in burglary as they give the victim no chance to raise an alarm, if used properly. One solution is to hire high level guards who are not easily affected, but this is costly. Another is to use dogs, as they are cheaper to run and 'use up' such spells. The best involve devices on the 'dead man's handle' principle — which ensure that the alarm is given because someone has fallen unconscious. The simplest of these is an inflated bladder fitted with valves which must be held firmly or it emits a piercing shriek (it should be possible to shift grip). A more elaborate version consists of a handle held down by a hand or foot which, when released, causes an alarm bell to ring. The bladders will be relatively cheap, at about 5gp each, the bell system will cost around 100gp to install.

4. Access Spells: There are a number of magical ways to gain entrance. Of these **passwall, disintegrate**, etc are uncommon and only need to be defended against when a great treasure is at stake. **Knock** is probably the most important spell for thieves. It may be of use after the event, when locked boxes have been brought out; before, as when a little used window is rendered unbolted for future access; or, of course, during. The defence against this is to use multiple bolt systems — but only where the value of the goods makes it likely that the spell will be used. **Spider climb** can provide means of access but is easily circumvented by cementing jagged glass onto walls to cut those naked hands and feet needed by the spell.

5. Magical Defences: There is a wide variety of these. In general, particularly where the death penalty is not mandatory for theft, automatic magical defences which cause death or serious injury will be illegal (especially as accidents could happen to the innocent). Therefore, passive spells — **magic mouths** to give alarms, or **permanent illusion** to cover doors — would be most used.

The importance of magic in the defences of the thieves' guild needs special attention. A thief in respectable cover should be protected from spells which invade privacy as well as anyone else, but nonetheless will prefer to conduct secret business underground — where rock provides shielding. Individuals will prize **amulets of protection from detection and location** and this idea may be extended into an enchantment to cover an entire room, such as **hiding place**, detailed below. Against spies who may be disguised by magic they must use detection spells themselves but, as always, the best defence is reliance upon their own ability to tell when someone is not what they seem. Finally the new spell detailed below, **protection from notice**, may be used to hide buildings.

6. Costs: It is likely that magic user associations would expel members convicted of serious offences and that the penalties of a court would be severe. Therefore magic users required to be present during a burglary will normally negotiate a significant percentage or high fees. Dual-class magic-user/thieves may find it convenient to adopt dual personae, to avoid getting into trouble with the MU guild. Lastly, when designing burglary adventures, the DM must balance the defences and any magic used, against the value of the goods being defended.

NEW SPELLS

The following new spells are likely to be very useful to the thief class. Clearly though, they are going to be quite rare, in that they are not going to be of immediate use to most magic users. Therefore, they should not be added to the repertoire of spells available to player-characters except when a request is made to a large guild. The spell will normally be found in scroll form.

The spells presented below should be applicable to either the D&D® or AD&D games. The D&D game stats are presented in italics.

Protection from Notice

(Enchantment/Charm)
Level: Magic user 5 — *Level: Magic user 5*
Illusionist 3
Range: Object Touched
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: Special — *Effect: Hides 1 object*
Components: V S M
Casting Time: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell may be cast on any inanimate object from a building to a sword. The effect is to render it nondescript and without interest to the casual observer — it is perceived in the same way as a magic user sees an armourer's or a dwarf sees trees; they might recall that they had seen the place or the object, but would not remember where or the details of what they saw. A person may pass a building under this enchantment every day but be unable to describe it nor recognise it when it is described. Only someone concentrating — for example counting doors — may notice the subject (a saving throw is required). Even persons detecting magic may be deceived into thinking it is a magical effect of no importance. On portable or previously enchanted items the effect is not permanent unless **permanency** is cast. The material component is 1gp of saffron per square foot of outer surface to be protected (roughly 5000gp for a medium sized building). The casting time is 1 segment per square foot as the saffron is dusted over it.

Hiding Place
(Abjuration)
Level: 4 *Level: 5*
Range: 1 room
Duration: 1 day/level of caster
Area of Effect: 1 room *Effect: Hides 1 room*
(2 cubic yards/level)
Components: V M
Casting Time: 1 hour
Saving Throw: None

The room on which this spell is to be cast must first be completely sealed; doors locked and windows boarded over, all cracks filled with rags, etc. Previously prepared magical scrolls (worth a minimum of 1000gp) with pictograms of eyes, ears and brains are then burned, and the command words spoken. For one day thereafter, the room will be completely undetectable by any means, and those within will all have protection against detection and location just as if they wore the amulet of that power. Additionally, anyone physically seeking the room, who previously knew its location, will forget it for one day (no save).

Distraction
(Enchantment/Charm)
Level: Magic User 3 *Level: Magic User 2*
Illusionist 1
Range: ½" per level
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: 4" x 4" *Effect: Distracts 1 or*
square *more persons*
Components: S M
Casting Time: 1 segment
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell may be cast on one person per odd level of the spell caster. It causes the victim to become preoccupied and not notice any movement, sound or smell around them. Should an action be attempted, in plain sight, which is expressly prohibited (such as entering a door which is guarded, but not approaching it) the saving throw will be at +2. Should violence be involved the spell is negated — but surprise is automatic. The material component is a piece of black gauze.

Random's Commodious Pocket
(Alteration)
Level: Magic User 3 *Level: Magic User 2*
Range: Touch
Duration: 6 turns + 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: One garment
Effect: Pocket in garment acts as temporary ***bag of holding***
Components: V S M
Casting Time: 1 round
Saving Throw: None

This spell may be cast on the pocket of a garment rendering it a temporary **bag of holding**. It will hold 50lb weight or 4 cubic feet in volume. If it is overloaded, if sharp objects are placed within, or if the spell expires, the bag ruptures and the contents vanish. Wily thieves use this spell on concealed pockets as, otherwise, they are still visible and a search will reveal the amazing contents. The effective encumbrance of the pocket is 5lbs and the same garment may not hold more than two articles at a time, or there is a 50% chance per pocket that items placed within can not be retrieved. The material component is a gold piece, placed in the pocket, which vanishes as the spell is cast.

CITY ENCOUNTERS FOR ADVENTURERS

Both the thieves' guild and the activities of individual thieves provide a rich field of encounters in the city. Players may be involved as victims, friends or criminals themselves. I intend to give some ideas for plotlines as well as tables for spontaneous encounters.

The Player-Character as Criminal
Whether the campaign is set in the city or the thief's residence is temporary, PCs will wish to occupy themselves with their profession. The following details opportunities for employment or casual thievery in the city.

The prestigious, high-return, jobs for thieves carry the highest risk, usually the longest preparation and therefore cannot be carried out too frequently. In between they still have to live, but there is lower risk employment available (also suitable for player characters between adventures). A high level thief will keep a large 'staff' both permanent and temporary, covert and overt, including bodyguards, thugs to 'warn' people, spies, spies on the spies spying on him, 'labourers' shifting illicit cargoes and stolen goods, book keepers to make plausible records, couriers of messages and small objects, buyers and sellers of various products, receivers and concealers of goods and people and collectors of protection money — sorry, tithes — from lower status thieves. Freelance thieves may take whatever opportunity brings them: honest work (if they can stomach it), honest work with a little extra on the side (more like it), picking up information to sell from gossip and the odd bit of sneaking, opportunistic petty theft of unattended property ("I thought it was thrown away, honest"), cheating at cards and in business.

Picking Pockets
The casual thief may, on occasion, find easy opportunities for picking pockets, but for regular money, pickpockets work best in teams. In a group of three, one distracts the victim, one is the dip who acquires the valuables and the third receives the goods. The most efficient method is to draw a crowd in which a whole host of pickpockets mingle. Halfway through the entertainment, before any crime has taken place, it is announced that there are pickpockets in the crowds — "look after your money, Ladies and Gentlemen". Honest citizens anxiously check their purses then, reassured, turn back to the spectacle. Once the pickpockets know the location of valuables, they get to work.

The tables opposite are suitable for use in any role-playing system which uses percentages for the relevant skills. They enable pickpocketing attempts to be run spontaneously.

To use them, first establish which technique the player is employing to find a victim, then consult **Table I** to determine success. **Tables II, IIa** and **IIb** detail the victim and the ease or difficulty of the theft. The wealth unit is multiplied by 3d6. Inform the player in general terms of the parameters of the encounter. For example, 9 (Goodwife) is rolled, followed by 17 (-15% to Pick Pockets die roll) and 8 (+5% on escape roll): you tell the player they see a woman bargaining at a stall who has put down her basket and purse behind her, but if they are noticed taking it there is open space to cross before they reach an alleyway. To accomplish the theft, a Pick Pockets must be rolled and the modifier from **IIa** added. If unsuccessful, refer to **Table III**. Should it be desirable to attempt an escape, roll a Hide in Shadows or similar percentage. Success indicates that the thief has mingled with the crowd or vanished into a dark alley before the victim can initiate pursuit. If failed, consult **Table IV** to determine whether a chase gets underway, adding the modifiers from Table I to the die roll. If it does, repeat the Hide in Shadows, with the new modifiers. If this fails go to **Table V** for the result and continue until the thief is caught, reaches safety — after 4-24 rounds — or evades pursuit. Finally, the attention of the militia may be attracted at any point in the procedure. In addition to the percentages given in **Table I**, there is a 20% chance that they will notice any disturbance.

Use of these tables in a campaign will show that pickpocketing can give a high return when organised, or a welcome addition to funds when casual, but cannot be relied on for steady income without incurring a high risk of being caught. This risk may be reduced by moderating their ambitions — if the thief attempts to steal a small item, a scarf or a trinket from a stall whose wealth unit is one quarter of the usual, the Pick Pockets roll may be modified by -20% and the Pursuit roll by +20.

TABLE I
Frequency of opportunities for theft

Situation	Chance of 1 encounter	Interest of watch
No active interest in thieving	2% per day	0%
Casual interest in thieving	5% per day	2% per day
Active, opportunist interest	10% per hour	10% per day
Making opportunities, lone thief	30% per hour	10% per hour
Making opportunities, pair of thieves	10% per turn	15% per hour
Making opportunities, trio of thieves	30% per turn	5% per turn
Organised crowd	60% per turn	20% per turn

TABLE II
Parameters of the encounter

Roll d8+d12	Victim	Hue & Cry Modifier	Wealth Unit	TABLE IIa 2nd roll Pickpocket Modifier	TABLE IIb 3rd roll Escape Modifier
2	Noble	+30%	3gp	+30%	+35%
3	Adventurer or other swaggering bullies	Special*	5gp	+25%	+30%
4	Spell Caster	+25%	10sp	+20%	+25%
5	Gentleman	+10%	5sp	+15%	+20%
6	Minor Official	—	2sp	+10%	+15%
7	Soldier	+5%	2sp	+5%	+10%
8	Shopkeeper	—	5sp	—	+5%
9	Goodwife	—	2sp	—	—
10	Labourer/Servant	—	2sp	—	—
11	Apprentice	—	1sp	—	—
12	Artisan	—	4sp	—	—
13	Pedlar/Trader	—	3sp	—	—
14	Beggar	-10%	1sp	—	-5%
15	Layabout	-10%	1sp	-5%	-10%
16	Goodlady	—	5sp	-10%	-15%
17	Pariah (slave, half orc)	-25%	1cp	-15%	-20%
18	Official	+5%	6sp	-20%	-25%
19	Militia Man	+20%	2sp	-25%	-30%
20	Merchant	+25%	1gp	-30%	-35%

The dice to be used are a d8 plus a d12. Make 3 rolls, once for Victim, Hue & Cry Modifier and Wealth Unit; the second time for the pick pockets modifier, and a third time for the Escape Modifier

* **Note:** Adventurers and their friends will make up a hue and cry all by themselves and pursue the thief come hell or high water.

TABLE III
Pickpocket failure

Roll percentile
01-30 unsuccessful, may try again
31-50 unsuccessful, try again at +10%
51-59 victim suspicious, try again at +20%
60-68 victim very suspicious, try again at +30% or make escape at -20%
69-85 victim suspects you, 50% chance that item was stolen, escape possible
86-95 victim saw attempt, escape at -15%
96-100 caught red-handed, 50% chance that item was stolen, escape only possible with violence.

When a thief steals an item but is spotted or suspected, the item may be passed to a colleague if neither is surprised in the next round.

Escape Modifiers to hide in shadows:
1. Area modifier from Table IIa
2. +/- up to 20% for local knowledge or lack of it
3. +5% for each 5 pursuers over 5
4. +10% if militia involved in pursuit
5. -15% for aid of colleague — eg, misleading pursuers.

TABLE IV
Hue and Cry

01-10 no pursuit
11-50 victim +0-3 others
51-75 victim +2-12 others
76-99 victim +4-40 others
100 spell caster with useful spells and roll again for additional pursuit.

TABLE V
Failure to escape

01 or less automatic escape
02-10 thief has gained ground, roll again at -10%
11-50 still pursued, roll again
51-60 lose ground, next roll at +10%
61-70 lose ground, next roll at +20%
71-82 pursuit divides, roll twice on subsequent rounds to evade each set
83-84 thief has fallen, pursuit at heels, roll again at +30
85-99 thief cut off by pursuers, no escape without violence
100+ run into worse trouble....

All modifiers should be added or subtracted from die rolls

The Player as Victim

As victims, players will most commonly suffer the depredations of pickpockets or muggers. The frequency of such encounters will vary widely but the DM should recognise that most encounters will be with low-level thieves, those scratching for a living on the streets.

Experienced thieves will tend to use more sophisticated ways to relieve players of their money. For example, gaining the friendship of a character over a long period, learning who, in their party, that person distrusts and then robbing the character in such a way as to implicate that person. Other frauds may involve crooked gambling or business deals; in both cases it may be difficult for the player to prove or even know they have been tricked.

Some thieves may seek friendship of players without intention of robbing them — although they may have ulterior motives. Adventurers can be useful for their skills or their social influence. For either of these reasons, non-thief characters may associate with a higher class of crook than do a party's thieves. Like other adventurers, thieves have gained their wealth neither through birth nor trade but through wits and toughness — they have a lot in common and are likely to enjoy their money in similar ways. Hence, in a party of adventurers, Harry Hardnose, a fighter, roisters with as nasty a gang of street-thieves as you wouldn't like to meet — intimidating honest citizens and periodically destroying the dives they drink in — whereas Stowdan, the well bred magic user, is welcome at many an exclusive gathering of merchants and lesser nobles and, indeed, at a private (unlicensed) gambling club where he enjoys a little flutter and the odd case of duty free brandy in the company of some of the city's most sophisticated criminals. Association with thieves brings, among other certain benefits, a degree of protection and a source of information. However, thieves are frequently in trouble — with the Law or with their own kind — and players may find this less than convenient; Harry finds himself in a fight out of his depth and Stowdan does not enjoy escaping a raid by employing his **reduce** spell to negotiate the privy window.

Players wishing to use the services of thieves may find themselves in dangerous situations where, unless they prove worthy of respect, they may end up paying more for less than they intended. Street gangs, in particular, may react this way, demanding tests of nerve such as a fight or a difficult climb. If this is failed they will be lucky to escape without their money, otherwise the gang will prove useful and even loyal.

The criminal underworld is an aspect of city life players cannot ignore and provides a varied source of plots and intrigue for the DM. Thieves may be found at all levels — with respectable cover identities and vast empires of crime and business — with sinister or glamorous reputations — in secret cabals or overt gangs — rich and powerful or struggling to survive. They are an integral part of business and social life at all levels in any city.

REFERENCES

The Medieval Underworld Andrew McCall, Hamilton 1979

Thieves' Kitchen: the Regency Underworld D A Low, Dent 1982

Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones in **Driftglass**, Samuel R Delaney, Signet 1971.

Venetia Lee

LET'S KEEP THINGS IN ORDER

'Damme. If it's not some blatherin' idiot goin' on about skins of animals I've never heard of, it's women — *women* I ask you! — twittering on about good value and quality and whatnot. Look here, all that matters is discipline. Twelve months in a year, twelve IMAGINE magazines in a binder. Simple. So, you've got 24 now — or at least you ought to have — and you need another one. Then *get* one laddie, get one. Pens out, writin' be- Wait for it.... writin' begin!'

1985 will not have begun for me without a new binder. Please send me ..... binders at £3.25 each (+ £1 p&p).

I enclose payment of £.....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Send to: ***IMAGINE*** *magazine (binders), The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD*

THE "WARLORD" GAMES SHOP

We now stock

* IRREGULAR MINIATURES SIEGE EQUIPMENT
* INTEGRAL TERRAIN
* PLATOON 20 FIGURES
* GALLIA 25mm BUILDINGS

as well as

Dungeons & Dragons * Traveller and most RPGs and supplements. War Games * Science Fiction Games * Citadel Figures * Torchlight Fantasy Products * Rule Books * Davco Microtanks

818 LONDON ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA
Tel. SOUTHEND 73308

Open 9.30-1.30 and 2.30-5.30 Closed Mondays

If you've ever been killed by the evil goblin, flamed by a dragon or turned to stone by a wizard...

then you need Micro Adventurer – the new monthly magazine devoted to all microcomputer adventures, war games and simulations.

Each issue offers a wide range of stimulating features, including:
- Helpline and Contact columns
- Reviews of the latest adventures
- Competitions with exciting prizes
- War gaming advice
- Adventures to type in and play
- Profiles of famous adventurers
- Advice on how to write your own adventures

If all this sounds too good to be true then fill in the form below to make sure you receive your copy of Micro Adventurer.

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please send me 12 issues (a year's subscription) of Micro Adventurer, beginning with the _____ issue.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Signature _____ Date _____

This order should be accompanied by a cheque made payable to Micro Adventurer.

UK subscribers

A year's subscription is £10.00 — please send this form with payment to Micro Adventurer, Subscriptions Department, Oakfield House, Perrymount Rd, Haywards Heath, Sussex.

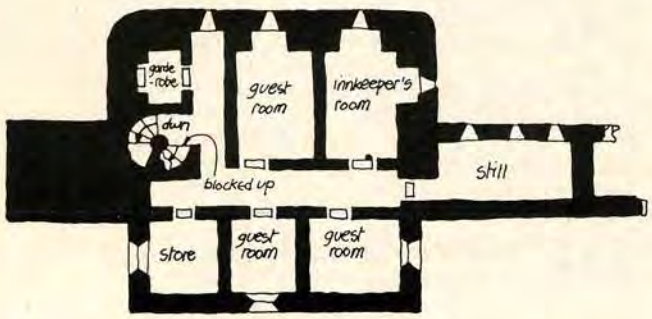
US/Canadian subscribers

A year's subscription at air-speeded rates is US$33.95 — please send this form with payment to Micro Adventurer, c/o Business Press International, 205 East 42nd St., New York, NY 10017.

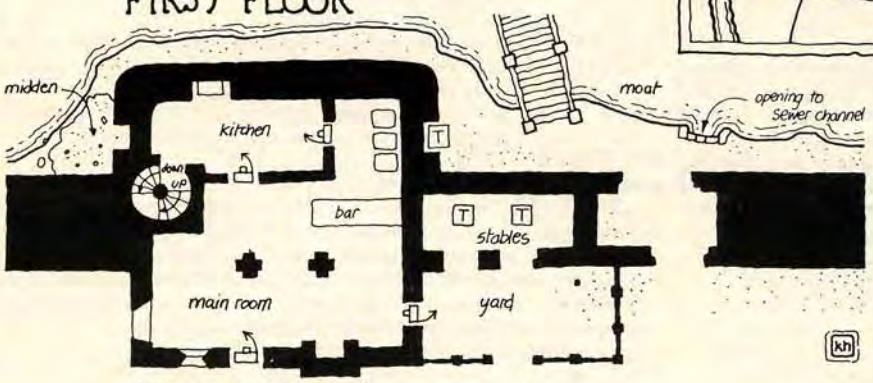
PELINORE

THE CITY LEAGUE

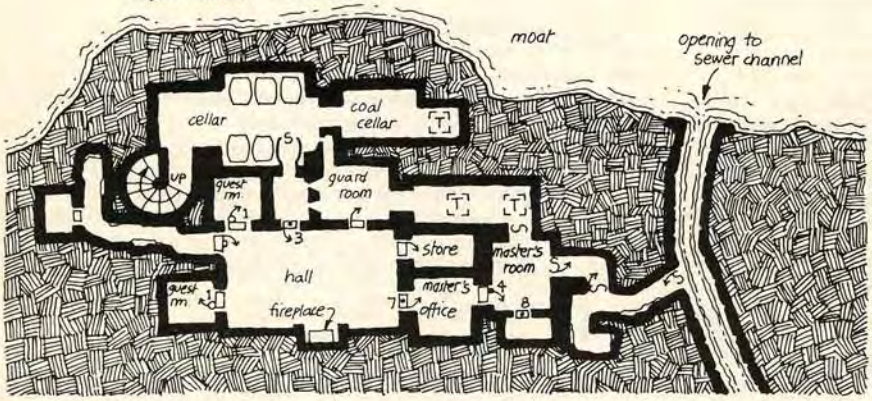
Deep in the heart of Pelinore has grown the City League: a mighty hive of humanity — and more than humanity — offering everything that an adventurer could desire. Each month **IMAGINE** *magazine presents a few buildings or institutions from within the City; describes the inhabitants and offers one or two ideas for adventures. This provides an ideal campaign base for the GM who can collect these articles and steadily build them up into the most comprehensive campaign setting available. Copy them, or cut them out, and store them in a ring file —and you need never be short of an idea for a city encounter again.*



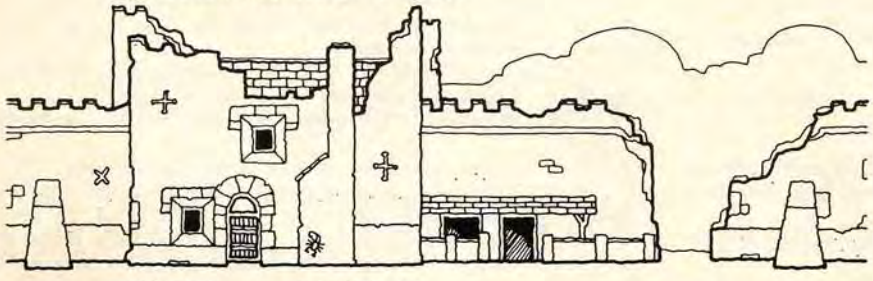
FIRST FLOOR



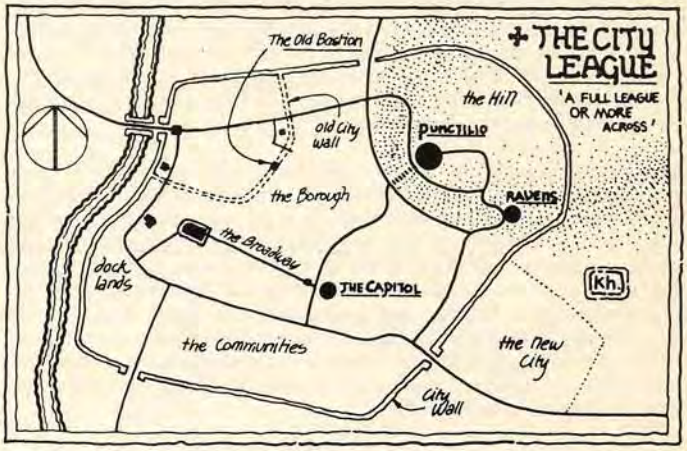
GROUND FLOOR

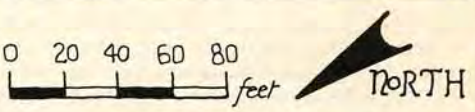


UNDERGROUND PLAN



VIEW of BASTION





KEY

T [T] trapdoor in floor/in ceiling

types of locks	unlocked	locked
lock accessible from both sides of door		
lock accessible from one side only		
bar or bolt		

difficulty in opening locks rated from 1 to 9

information about doors

plain door		trapped door	
direction door opens		magically-locked or trapped door	
reinforced door (see A/C and hps)		door with secret side	
door with peephole on one side		door with concealed side	

34 The OLD BASTION (aka the SCORPION'S NEST)
A Thieves' Safe House

by Paul Emsley

Throughout the City League, local thieves' guilds have set up Safe Houses. These are places where a thief on the run can hole up for a few days or evade imminent capture. The Safe Houses can be identified by the thieves who use them by some identifying mark or symbol. This mark is usually known only to local guild members. Some Safe Houses are simply shops with secret rear entrances, others are elaborate hide-outs with permanent staff. One such is the Old Bastion, so called because it occupies one of the ancient keeps of the old city wall which is now largely in ruins. To passers-by it looks like a rough ale-house, which it is — superficially. Regulars know it as the Scorpion's Nest; a reflection more of themselves than its secret.

The Safe House is beneath the inn and has only one entrance — from the inn's cellar through a secret door — which is constantly watched through a peep-hole. Although there is only one entrance there are several emergency exits. These range from the private one used by the Safe House Master, to the trap doors up into the stables to the last resort route up through the midden. There are only four regulars who run the Safe House. The Master, Fra-lan (**34e**); the Store Keeper, Orf Noglinsdottir (**34f**); and two guard/helpers. When thieves are hiding in the house they largely look after themselves and take turns on look-out and guard duty; when no-one is staying there the guard work is done by Padhraig (**34g**) and Said (**34h**).

Sited right in the middle of the inn's main room is a long wooden table. Places at it are reserved for the most infamous of the regulars at the inn. Such a reserved place is regarded as a great status symbol and much blood is spilt over the right to sit there and the position taken — those sitting nearest the chairman being the most admired. The chairman holds his (and currently, her) position by *main droit* and occasionally leads the 21 members of the Table on lunatic adventures (raids on guard posts and the like). None of the members of the table know of the function of the inn as a Safe House.

WORKERS IN THE INN

34a
Squirvy Patch; M; T1(Fr3)/T1(F4); C/CE;
Dagger; AC 6/7; hp 15/37

H
S 15
I 8
W 5
D 17
C 10
Ch 6

☐ *Scruffy, pasty, one-eyed; filthy leather apron over grubby jerkin and trews*
☐ *Innkeeper, look-out*
☐ *Suspicious, quiet, jumpy, mean, wretched*
☐ *Knows all the thieves and regulars well but is almost unknown outside the inn, which is the way he likes it; refuses to wear a patch over the unpleasant wreck of his eye which he swears was lost in a battle with a Unicorn; began life as a freeman/fighter but has switched to thief*

34b-d
Patch's staff are three stupid scullions: Beizchkwang (M; F2; AC 9/10; hp 14/16), Idimini (F; F2; AC 8/9; hp 13/15) and Brown Mim (F; F1; AC 8; hp 6/7). Beizchkwang lusts after the gorgeous Angovidintrix Blister (**5l**) and consequently hates Beruth (**4d**); it's difficult to get these three to remember your order, never mind getting them to pass on any useful information about anything

SAFE HOUSE STAFF

34e
Fra-lan; M; T9/T10; C/LE;
longsword +3 (detect traps and invisible; know alignment) AC -1/-2; hp 35/49

H
S 13
I 15
W 10
D 18
C 15
Ch 16

☐ *Short; pleasant face; beautifully decorated* ***leather armour +2*** *over fine silks,* ***bracers of defence AC6*** *(worn as a head-band),* ***ring of protection +2***
☐ *Master Thief, Safe House Master, retired Guild Master, owner of the Old Bastion (**34**)*
☐ *Superficially gentlemanly, devious, sharp, unscrupulous, very worldly-wise*
☐ *Known and revered amongst the brotherhood of thieves, his name has even been heard in polite society*

34f
Orf Noglinsdottir; F; T5; N/NE;
dagger +2 (+4 vs giants), poison dagger; AC 9/8; hp 16/25

H
S 8
I 15
W 13
D 16
C 9
Ch 8

☐ *Ill-fitting clothes over corpulant body*
☐ *Safe House storekeeper and cook, Cutpurse/Burglar*
☐ *Jovial, witty, poorly organised, spiteful*
☐ *Would be recognised in the local markets, regular at the Cock (**14**)*

34g
Padhraig the Dip; M; T3; N/CN;
shortsword and sling; AC 7/8; hp 10/14

E
S 12
I 9
W 12
D 16
C 9
Ch 7

☐ *Very tall and stooping; sharp dresser*
☐ *Safe House guard*
☐ *Arrogant, sly, grovels to superiors*
☐ *Well known in local dives*

34h
Said'h'rm'ra; F; T3; N/CN;
longsword, club; AC4; hp 11/15

H
S 14
I 17
W 9
D 18
C 11
Ch 16

☐ *Swarthy; hooded robes; leather armour; scarf over mouth*
☐ *Safe House guard*
☐ *Clever, quiet, remorseless*
☐ *Newcomer from Sarpathian Mountains, Said works here as her incomprehensible accent makes it impossible to work elsewhere; brilliant young thief; has earned the envy and hatred of the Dip (**34g**) – knows this and won't leave before giving him reason to remember her*

33i-n
The Safe House typically has 6 fugitives at any one time, each fugitive staying a couple of nights at most. At busy times up to 30 thieves can be accommodated. Currently, the occupants are the Vigas brothers: Argen, Morr, Cap, 'Legs', Thorp and Kensal; AC 7, hp 10, armed with longswords. They do their own cooking and cleaning and act as guards and look-outs during their stay.

REGULARS AT THE INN

34o
Anbury; M; F1/A1; C/CE;
jester's stick with hidden, poisoned, blade; AC 5; hp 6/4

H
S 13
I 12
W 8
D 17
C 9
Ch 13

☐ *Bland, easily forgotten face; leather armour dressed up to look like a Jester's costume*
☐ *Veteran/Bravo; double agent for the Knights Ocular*
☐ *Acts mute, foolish and amusing; observant, careful*
☐ *Known by few outside the inn; sleeps rough and seems to spend all day here; in Advanced: member of the assassins guild; in both systems he gets information to the KO through an impenetrable system of contacts and drops*

34p
Cluzoh; M; F3/P2; L/LG;
two-handed sword and dagger; AC 2/3; hp 20/16

H
S 12
I 9
W 13
D 7
C 9
Ch 17

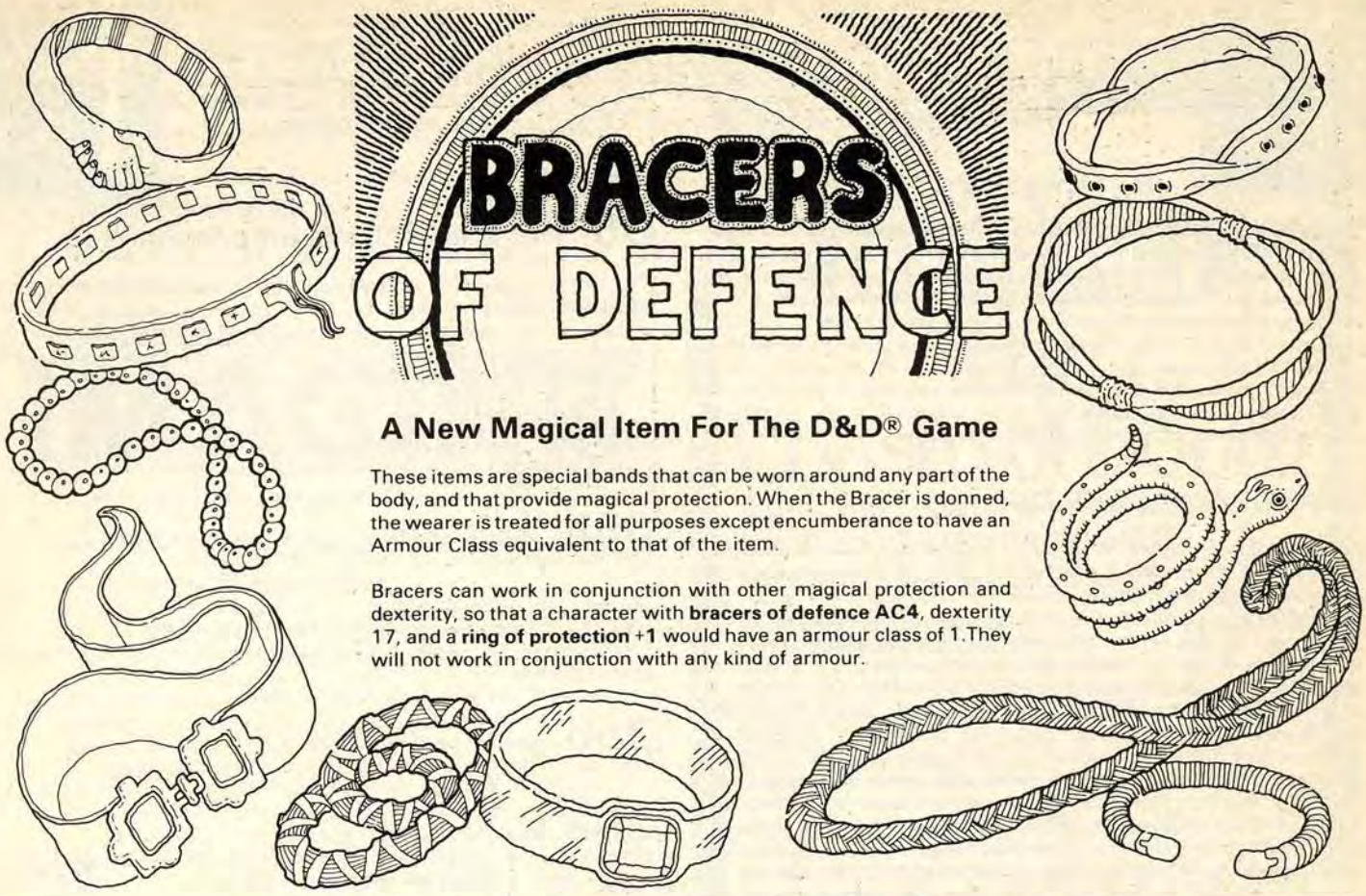
☐ *Dishevelled, unkempt, hungover; filthy plate mail*
☐ *Swordmaster/Keeper*
☐ *Depressed, alcoholic, desperate*
☐ *In this state Cluzoh wouldn't recognise his mother; came to clean up this 'den of vice', but 'they' got to him first – through the bottle*

34q
Tolin Swallow; F; F6; C/CE;
longsword +3, dagger, mace, longbow; AC 8/9; hp 40/50

¼Ogre
S 18^{25}
I 8
W 7
D 15
C 17
Ch 6

☐ *Ugly; dark jacket and bright red (stained) hose*
☐ *Myrmidon, Chairman of the Long Table, Mercenary*
☐ *Loud, violent, sadistic*
☐ *Friend of Patch (**34a**) – which makes the fact that she knows nothing of the Safe House even more amazing; known by Long Table members and feared locally*

There are 20 other members of the Table; they are a mixture of classes of levels 2-4 and are ruthless, ignorant bullies to the last.



A New Magical Item For The D&D® Game

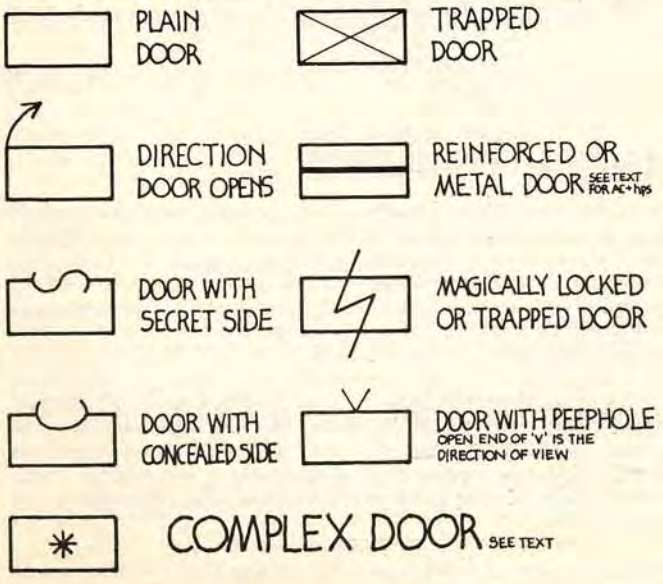
These items are special bands that can be worn around any part of the body, and that provide magical protection. When the Bracer is donned, the wearer is treated for all purposes except encumberance to have an Armour Class equivalent to that of the item.

Bracers can work in conjunction with other magical protection and dexterity, so that a character with **bracers of defence AC4**, dexterity 17, and a **ring of protection +1** would have an armour class of 1. They will not work in conjunction with any kind of armour.

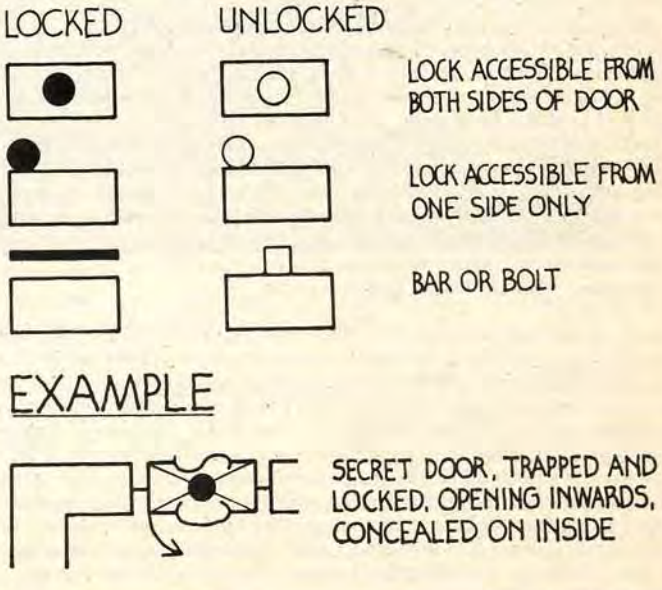
THIEVES, LOCKS and DOORS

One of the gaps in the **D&D®** and **AD&D®** games is the lack of detail offered in the rules with regard to types of locks and how to pick them. In this issue of **IMAGINE™** magazine, Chris Barlow writes about lock complexity and how that affects the ability of a thief to open them. The detail that can be included about locks and doors goes much further than that, however. There are five (at least) different ways of locking a door:
(1) a tumble lock accessible from both sides (like modern mortice locks)
(2) a tumble lock similar to type 1 but only accessible from one side
(3) padlocks
(4) bolts
(5) bars.
The rules seem to assume that only locks of type 1 are ever encountered, as there is no advice to tell DMs how to cope with thieves faced with any of the other varieties. This has led to material presented in modules and magazines ignoring these variations and possibilities. As of this issue of IMAGINE, details about locks and the doors they are on will be included on **PELINORE** maps. As can be seen from the key below (and on the map of the Safe House) a great deal of information can be included with a few symbols. With this new knowledge the DM can make the adventure more or less difficult for the players depending on their inventiveness and the DM's attitudes to how a thief could deal with the various options. For example it may be considered that only type 1 locks can be picked from both sides of a door whereas types 2 to 5 are unpickable from the 'wrong' side; or they may require special, expensive, tools to do the job; or they may make no difference at all; or some, like bolts, may be unpickable under any circumstances. Whichever way, as DM, you choose, you will have more options with these new symbols.

INFORMATION ABOUT DOORS


PLAIN DOOR
TRAPPED DOOR
DIRECTION DOOR OPENS
REINFORCED OR METAL DOOR SEE TEXT FOR AC + hps
DOOR WITH SECRET SIDE
MAGICALLY LOCKED OR TRAPPED DOOR
DOOR WITH CONCEALED SIDE
DOOR WITH PEEPHOLE OPEN END OF 'V' IS THE DIRECTION OF VIEW
COMPLEX DOOR SEE TEXT

TYPES OF LOCKS



EXAMPLE

STRUCTURE OF THIEVES' GUILDS

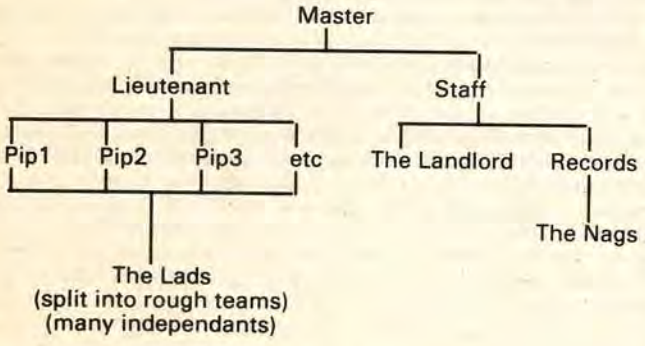
The organisation of the Thieves' Organisations of Pelinore

by Tom Kirby

In **IMAGINE**™ magazine, #22, many of the guilds that control trade within the City League and its environs were listed or discussed. One category was that of the thieves' guilds. As was suggested there are dozens within T'League. All these guilds, and most thieves' guilds throughout Pelinore, fall into one of two types: basically lawful (L/LN) or basically chaotic (C/CN). Thieves can be of any alignment otherwise in use in the campaign, and each would join the most suitable guild, although it is possible that in smaller towns only one of the two types would exist. In such cases, the thief character might feel quite uncomfortable having to join an unsuitable group.

LAWFUL-TYPE GUILDS

Lawful guilds are hierarchical organisations that own their headquarters. The officers of the guild have fixed duties and responsibilities; they seek authority for matters outside their control from their superiors and they delegate authority to their juniors. These officers decide which jobs should be done when, and control their guildsmembers' activity to ensure no 'over-fishing' in the locality; they also deal with handing out punishments to transgressors. Successors to these posts are selected in advance and trained up appropriately. Everything is done in a business-like manner. Being thieves, however, means that methods of advancement differ slightly from those accepted in the traditional business world. Thieves are expected to watch their own backs and if they fail in that duty then they fail as thieves and deserve their fate. It is quite usual that an ambitious young thief will find his route to the top aided by a series of unfortunate accidents to his superiors; similarly, ambitious young thieves often don't come back from tricky jobs. No one in the guild will do anything about these accidents unless the perpetrators make themselves obvious — the worst sin that can be committed by a thief is being obvious



Key:
Master — Master thief who runs the guild
Lieutenant — Thief in charge of all active operations
Staff — Thief in charge of bureaucratic matters like maintenance of the guild house, safe houses and records of local activities
Pip — Specialist in one or more areas of operations, must be consulted before a specific job or scam is undertaken
The Landlord — Thief with specific responsibility for the guild house and the safe houses
Records — Thief that controls the record keeping functions — names of guild members, amounts collected from various organised events, dates of jobs, dates of big valuable shipments, etc
The Lads — the mass of members
The Nags — the clerks working in records

Larger guilds would have more than one Lieutenant, many Pips, and several Nags, while smaller guilds would probably have only one man on the Staff side to control that whole area. Most well organised Guilds will also operate some kind of cell structure to minimise the possibility of discovery, with all the officers of the Guild operating through intermediaries (even with each other!) who know very little of what is going on. In some guilds, this structure may be so sophisticated that the Master, Lieutenant and Staff never meet, with even appointments to office being done by proxy, and being judged on reputation alone. This means that names are very rarely used, and identification is often only possible through a complicated system of code-words and ciphers, to prevent penetration by 'undesirable' elements.

Example:

35 The Thieves Guild around the Walk

The thieves guild that operates in the environs of the Walk (see **IMAGINE magazine** issues 20, 22 & 23) is a lawful guild. It has 25 members, and about two score associated freelance thieves. By unfortunate circumstances (an inter-Guild war), the Walk Thieves Guild finds itself with only three Pips, an unusually small complement.

35a **Sheer Dreeve**; M; T9/T10; L/LN; AC -2; hp 42/63
Guild Master; H; quiet & undemonstrative but efficient and thorough

35b **Bij-bij the Knife**; F; T7; N/LN; AC 0; hp 34/44
Lieutenant; H; aggressive, reliable and faithful

35c **Greeslime the Wise**; F; T7; N; AC 4; hp 26/33
Staff; G; smelly and unpleasant but brilliant record keeper most of which she memorises

35d **Sharpy**; M; T5; L/NG; AC 3; hp 20/25
First Pip; H; ambitious and sneaky, in charge of the streets

35e **Khan Ai**; M; T5; L/LE; AC 2; hp 19/24
Second Pip; ½E; in charge of burglary and break-outs at which he is brilliant, after Sharpy's job and trying to kill him

35f **Quellia**; F; T4; N/LN; AC 5; hp 15/18; Third Pip; H; brilliantly inventive, will go far if someone doesn't stop her, in charge of scams and protection

35g **"Ripper" Orccry**; M; T5; L/LE; AC 6; hp 22/27
The Landlord; H; named after his hook (left arm) which prevents active thieving, desperate to get 'back into the mainstream' and will remove obstacles ruthlessly

35h **Anah Dzhohans**; F; T5; N/NG; AC 9; hp 19/24
Records; H; quiet, mousey, dull, known as "Inky" in the guild

35i **Llarllarna of Catrellis**; F; T3; L/LE; AC 8; hp 8/12
Nag #1; E; vicious, vindictive, spiteful nature hidden behind fluttering eyelids and blushes, very pretentious

35j **Pierrio**; M; T3; N; AC 7; hp 10/13
Nag #2; H; pleasant, unambitious, brilliant with numbers, fine athlete

There are 15 T1-2 and apprentices working within the guild, each can be considered as AC 7; hp 6

CHAOTIC-TYPE GUILDS

The organisation of chaotic guilds is fairly unpredictable. Most are small groups of thieves ruled by the might of the leader or a faction within the guild. The membership is mutually suspicious and changes frequently; each constantly looking for the opportunity to overthrow the leader and take control. In large towns such small groups would soon be swamped by the efficiency of lawful-type guilds, so there soon arise confederations of chaotic-type guilds, wherein local guild-leaders agree to cooperate over sharing safe houses, passwords and areas of operations. Periodically, a charismatic leader will emerge from one of the guilds and exert authority over all of them, giving rise to a temporary period of success and wealth. Inevitably, the leader will wane and the cooperative will either be led by another charismatic leader or will dissolve. These cooperatives are marked by occasional bloodbaths as certain groups try to seize control.

Chaotic guilds do not hold property for meeting places or safe-houses but arrange such matters on an ad hoc basis as need arises.

TAKE NO CHANCES!

Would you send your friends out into the unknown, with nothing to guide them?

Would you want to miss out on that vital piece of information that might lead you to hidden treasure?

If you want to be sure of getting all the latest information about the best in role-playing

subscribe to

IMAGINE™

Adventure Games Magazine

Complete role-playing game adventures in every issue

12 months subscription rates

UK & Ireland — £12 (post free delivery)
USA — $42 Europe — £21
Elsewhere — £25

Please make your cheque or postal order (no cash or international money orders accepted) payable to TSR UK Ltd and send it to:

IMAGINE magazine (subscriptions), The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

NAME.....

ADDRESS .....

.....

NEW

BOOK 4 IN THE UNIQUE, SOLO ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURE SERIES

LONE WOLF

The Chasm of Doom

A missing convoy and a lost patrol... the start of a terrifying battle for control of the Lastlands.

STILL ONLY £1.50 FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND GAME STORES

Enter a Dangerous World

The Lone Wolf books are action-packed solo adventures set in the fantastic world of Magnamund. As Lone Wolf you possess 'Kai Disciplines': warrior skills that will help you survive in the hostile Lastlands. As the adventures unfold from page to page and from book to book, you will gain new skills to help you in the fight against your bitter enemies – the Darklords of Helgedad.

The Chasm of Doom

To the south of your homeland of Sommerlund lie the rich mines of Ruanon. A convoy of gold, on its way to the capital, suddenly vanishes. Your King sends a patrol to investigate... they never return. For you, Lone Wolf, it is the start of a mission that will take you to the brink of the abyss; to Maakengorge – the Chasm of Doom.

- Over fifty superb line drawings *plus* a full-colour game map and action chart.
- No dice needed. The unique combat system allows you to become Lone Wolf wherever and whenever you like!
- Software, metal miniatures, T-shirts and Lone Wolf Club membership now available.

Other Lone Wolf Adventures

The first three adventures in the Lone Wolf series are: **1. Flight from the Dark, 2. Fire on the Water, 3. The Caverns of Kalte** – all available in Sparrow Paperbacks.

SPARROW BOOKS
AN IMPRINT OF ARROW PUBLICATIONS

To: Arrow Publications, Dept. MA, 17-21 Conway Street, London W1
Please send me further information on:

Please tick box(es)

☐ Lone Wolf Spectrum 48K Software ☐ Lone Wolf Merchandise and free club membership

Name _____

Address _____

_____

CLASSIFIED ADS

IMAGINE™ magazine offers special rates to those interested in taking out classified advertisements. These cost just 10p per word or £3.00 per column centimetre (pre-payment required).

If you want to advertise in IMAGINE magazine write to: IMAGINE magazine (classified) The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

GENUINE CHAINMAIL Vests, Hoods, Coifs, Hauberks, Gauntlets, etc, made to measure. Further details telephone 0227 263469 or write 27 Ivy House Road, Whitstable CT5 1PL

SPECTRAL VISION issue no. 1, 40 side A4 AD&D fanzine as reviewed in IMAGINE #21, sure to become a collectors item, for you copy send 75p (including P&P) to Mark McLean, 9 Hill Walk, Fareham, Hants PO15 6NF. Thank you.

SOUTHAMPTON'S Centre for Games. All the latest games stocked from TSR, Games Workshop, Avalon Hill and many others. Also Citadel and Minifigs stocked.

PASTIMES II, East Street Centre, Southampton. Tel: 0703-21789.

FREE PERSONALITY ANALYSIS from Health and Ability Centre, PO Box 297, Hove, E Sussex. Send SAE or Tel. 0903 750770

CLASSIFIED ADS

The Fantasies Have Just Begun

NOW FROM THE GALAXY OF FANTASY, A NEW GAMES SHOP IS BORN. IT BRINGS A WORLD OF CHOICE TO YOU. ENTER OUR WORLD AND SEARCH THROUGH CHESTS FULL OF FANTASY GAMES AND FIGURES DISCOVER A KNOWLEDGEABLE STAFF TO HELP AND ADVISE YOU. COME INTO A NEW AND EXCITING REALM OF FANTASY. COME TO VISIT GAMES PEOPLE PLAY...

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

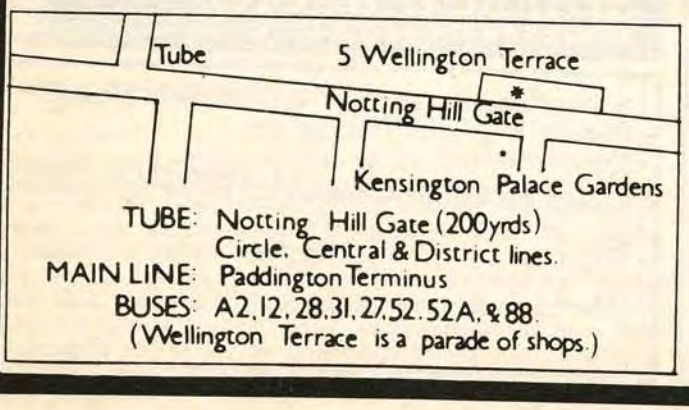
ROLE PLAYING, SCIFI, FANTASY, WARGAMES, MAGAZINES & LITERATURE AND COMPUTERS

MAIL ORDERS WELCOMED

5 Wellington Terrace, Notting Hill Gate
London W2 Tel. 727-9275

OPEN FROM 10a.m. to 6p.m. MON–SAT

VISA



TUBE: Notting Hill Gate (200yrds) Circle, Central & District lines.
MAIN LINE: Paddington Terminus
BUSES: A2, 12, 28, 31, 27, 52, 52A, & 88.
(Wellington Terrace is a parade of shops.)

Now open is a complete games shop... Games People Play. Come in and you'll find a great selection of games.

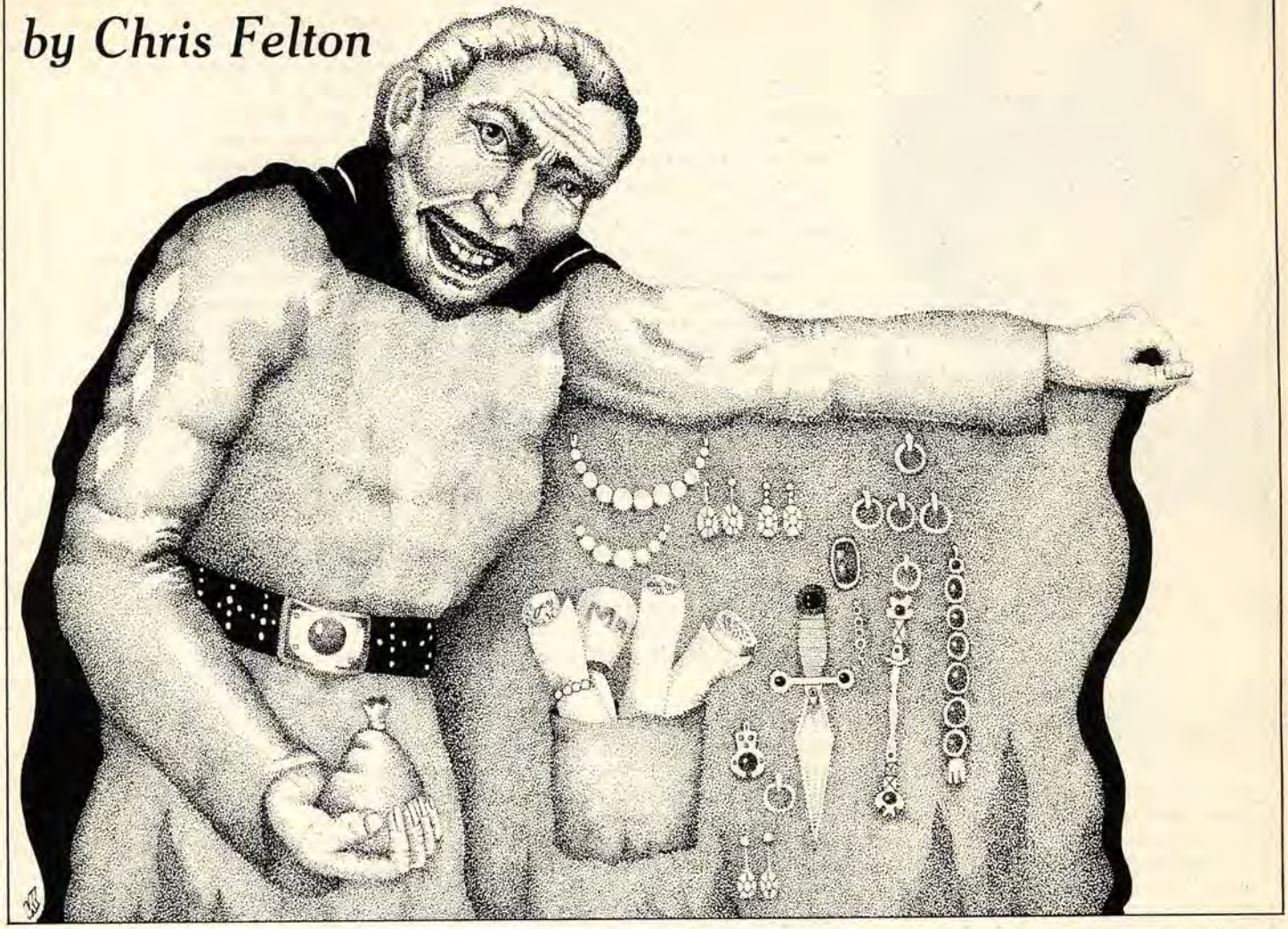
- A vast range of board conflict and computer games.
- Stocks of figures by Chronicle, Essex, Jacobite, Tabletop, Oracle, Citadel, Skytrex, Heroics and others.
- A large selection of rules, reference books, magazines and accesories.
- All major and most minor role playing systems.

At Games People Play you'll meet a knowledgeable staff to help and advise you. So come to see us. We're the gamers games shop.

Please mention IMAGINE magazine when replying to advertisements

ALL THAT GLISTENS....

by Chris Felton



IMAGINE Magazine Readers' Survey

Category:
Articles, rules expansion

Like	**66%**
Dislike	**8%**

'I'm sorry, lad. It's worthless.'
'What?'
'It's a fake. A coloured-glass imitation.'
'It can't be. It's worth thousands.'
A slow shake of the head.
'But I paid a fortune for it. It's columnar-cut: worth my weight in gold.'
'Sorry, son. You've been done.'

Everybody loves a con-man: everyone, that is, except the victims. Top confidence tricksters have elevated theft to an art form: taking only from those who can afford it, using the greed of others to line their pockets. There are lower forms of confidence trick, which belong in the sewers, and people keep getting hurt by them, but to make a living of it a trickster must rise above the lower forms of crime. To run a big scam (also known as a snow job, fleecing, or shell game) takes more planning, co-ordination, and investment than most other forms of crime, and these make a good con great entertainment, as proved by the success of such films as *Only When I Larf* and *The Sting*.

Few confidence tricks appear in frps, probably because most GMs lack ideas for a storyline convincing enough to persuade characters to put up their money; player-characters are more suspicious than the run-of-the-mill 'mark'. This article should supply those ideas. There are other reasons for the paucity of tricks in games. One self-appointed 'expert' wrote an article for beginning GMs advising them to avoid trying to con players as "it feels too much like GM vs player". This is rubbish; a well-run con feels more like NPC vs PCs than most scenarios, as GMs tend to aim most adventures directly at the abilities of characters, while a good scam can work on anybody. It also makes the campaign feel more realistic: the NPCs are starting to relate to the characters as something other than faceless sources of rumour and training.

Most of the time, though, the players will be more suspicious than their characters would be. Most con tricks will take place during 'down time', which in many campaigns is a featureless gap for rest, recuperation, and training between adventures, and the attempt to throw in new activities will stand out like a dragon in a chariot race.

The first priority, then, before the NPC can con the characters, is for the GM to con the players. Few GMs are totally tight-lipped about their forthcoming adventures, so let as many open details of the scenario slip out as you usually do. One week the GM may casually ask the group during a tea-break if anyone has a good aerial combat system, and the next week he passes one round for comments. The same week, one of the notes he passes to a player is written on the back of a sheet on which he's been working out the costs of training fledgelings, and someone visiting him at home may notice that his **Monster Manual** is open at the 'Hippogriff to Hydra' page. Players talk amongst themselves, so no-one will be surprised (or, more significantly, suspicious) when someone offers their characters three hippogriff eggs. As they haggle over the

price, one of the eggs is 'sold' to an anonymous bidder in town, so the number of eggs available goes down to two, and the characters leap to outbid each other.

Second, set up the cons as you would any other scenario. If the players normally follow up tavern rumours, have them overhear two seasoned mercenaries in the next booth discussing the old King's son's chances of overcoming the usurper. If they normally follow up information collected from their last adventure, include in the hill giant's treasure a letter offering the old King's son the secret allegiance of a minor noble in town, whose messenger failed to return from a mission a week or so ago. If they work on a roving commission from a King, temple or minor lord, let them receive a quiet offer of better terms of employment if they change their allegiance, or be asked to investigate the rumour that the former King's son is still alive after all (and while they are investigating it they receive the offer of better terms).

Third, assume that the conman will have researched his subject well, and without hard work the players should not be able to spot any faults in the story — this means that you, as GM, must know the story inside out, with all the details prepared. These details will, of course, include provision for time for a clean getaway after the payoff, so a con involving the sale of fake hippogriff eggs will end with the passing over of the 'eggs', and the players will gleefully keep them warm for six to eight weeks before realising that they're taking an awfully long time to hatch....

The only exception to the in-depth research rule is when an NPC tries a spur-of-the-moment con. The stableboy's brother has heard from the stableboy that the travellers are foreigners, just passing through. Next day, he dons his forest gear, bow and sword (he's a poacher as well as a militia volunteer), and awaits them a mile or two down the road from the inn. When they arrive, he asks for the toll of half a gold piece per rider for the group which 'keeps the orcs, ogres, and such vermin off the road'.

Finally, remember that the con must fit in with the game. If the player characters have little interaction with NPCs during 'down time' apart from buying spells and training, don't suddenly try to throw them into a political con involving lots of interaction, and don't suddenly change your apparent stance on the sale of magical items. All these will cause the players to smell a rat.

There are four traits which confidence tricksters can play on: gullibility, fear, greed, and dishonesty. Here are some examples of scams which use each trait in the victims.

GULLIBILITY

Hippogriff's Eggs: A group of adventurers have acquired a clutch of eggs from a hippogriff's nest. Unfortunately, they have urgent business many miles from here, and will not be able to look after the eggs on the journey, so they must sell them. This can be varied by using dragon's eggs, pegasus' eggs, owlbears' eggs, and so on.

Treasure Map: Among the documents in the estate of a recently dead merchant is a map showing the way to an old tomb complex. The merchant's executors are selling it to the highest bidder to turn it into cash for the estate. Variations can include a stolen map of the same type, or a map made by a lower-level group of adventurers who claim they went to a location but were beaten off by giants (or a monster type suitable for the party's level).

Land Speculation: A minor theft of a merchant's papers has turned up a very interesting fact, which the thief will sell to the group for a modest sum. A powerful shipping line has had a group of adventurers trail blazing in the hills, and they've found a previously unknown gap in the hills, which will cut ten days off the caravan route. On the new route, at the foot of the hills, is a small inn, at present the owner is barely scraping a living but the business will boom when the new route is open. Since the local Baron will not sell any land to the adventurers, the existing inn is the only practical method to cash in on the boom, but since it has been in his family for many years, the innkeeper is reluctant to sell, and is demanding 7500gp, well over the 6000gp the inn is really worth, but a good price considering its potential. The stolen document is a letter asking the shipping line to send 7500gp to the adventurers to seal the bargain. Of course, the letter is a forgery, the thief is a paid hireling of the owner of the inn, the pass does not exist, the Baron has been bribed not to sell any land for building, the inn is losing money and has a market value of 4500gp, and the innkeeper wants to sell the inn and retire, which is why he devised this scheme.

Property Sales: A town house comes on the market: "very cheap for quick sale, I need capital immediately". The seller is not in fact the owner, merely the manager with no authority to sell, but with 1500gp in his pocket he'll be out of town by the time the players find that out. Variations: the house is a farm, business, etc. The seller could be the real owner, selling to a half-dozen buyers before absconding, or selling a property about to be seized by the courts for non-payment of debts. An estate agent may take the characters deposit, then claim that the previous owner of the property has sold it to someone else and keep the character's deposit to cover his expenses.

Cargo Switch: A merchant hires the player characters to guard his valuable cargo. When the cargo arrives in town the valuables have been replaced by bales of straw (or rocks, or whatever gives the right weight to the tied-down cargo). The player characters are accused of theft, their reputation for arriving in the town with untraceable valuables cited as evidence of their previous criminal ways, and the merchant claims the insurance.

FEAR

Protection Racket I: A figure steps out of the bushes as the adventurers are heading into the wilderness and requests a toll for the group who keep the road safe. If they refuse, he hints darkly about the fact that the group knows every inch of the road, including all the suitable campsites, and they are used to sneakily tracking and ambushing game as well as monsters....

Protection Racket II: A character runs a Mafia-style 'protection racket': pay up or you get hurt. He may or may not have the muscle to back up his threats.

GREED

Expedition Financing: A group of adventurers (merchants, mercenaries) wants to follow up a rumour of a new source of wealth in the mountains (forest, swamp, tundra, desert), but cannot afford the equipment and supplies necessary. They want the characters to make them a loan to fund the expedition. In return, they get a healthy share of any profits, so they are getting a large return on a risky investment. After getting the financing, they set off into the mountains (etc), then double back into another area where they sell everything, and live off the proceeds. When the money runs out they ride back

to town via a two-week journey through the mountains to give themselves the proper haggard, hungry look before coming back to report that they had failed, but had picked up some promising leads....

Magic Items: In exchange for a **raise dead**, **stone to flesh**, or whatever, adventurers are willing to give the player characters a magic ring (sword, robe, etc) of unknown power which they've just acquired off some powerful opponent. It may be cursed, it may be the GM's method of getting them into the next scenario, it may just be useful.... In fact, it is not really magical, but has a **magic mouth** set to go off when within 10' of an orc in golden armour riding a Ki-rin or some equally improbable trigger condition, or **continual light**, or both.

Pretender to the throne: The son of the last King, whose line was usurped by the present King, is alive despite rumours to the contrary, and is of age to claim his birthright, so he is raising support, both physical and financial. Those who support him now will rank highly when he regains his birthright. It will take a long time for anyone to realise that the King's son is a fake; an adventurer using his resemblance to the old King's dead son to try to usurp power for himself. His chances are poor, and he will channel much of the financial help he receives into the 'raising of an army' and 'ensuring support after the coup': actually he's salting it away for when he sees his supporters losing and runs away.

Gladiator's Fall: A top gladiator (chariot driver, athlete, etc) builds up a reputation as unbeatable. The characters hear word that an out-of-town challenger has brought his own backers, who are putting up a lot of cash against the champion. They have the chance to place a 'sure thing' bet on the champion. The challenger wins the long, difficult fight, and the champion gets a cut of the fortune the challenger's backers won by his losing the fight against his almost equally talented accomplice.

DISHONESTY

Always the best trait for a con artist to exploit, as the mark (victim) is doing something illegal as well and can't go to the Guard.

Weapon Running: A representative of a group of orcs (bandits, etc) informs the player characters of an opportunity to run weapons to the group. There is no group, as the contact man was an accomplice of the weapon dealer who had four hundred unwanted swords on his hands and wanted to get rid of them at the higher price he knows he can get for a deal which guarantees his silence about the destination of the weapons. When the characters have bought the weapons, the dealer will either tip off the border guard, so that the players get caught, or he will send out the contact man to explain that, unfortunately, the group has been wiped out by a marauding band of adventurers, and there is no longer a market for the weapons, nor the money for paying for them. In the latter case, the dealer will be happy to buy the weapons back at the standard price (or a slight mark down, as other dealers will ask embarrassing questions about the origin of the weapons).

'Stolen' Gems: A member of the Thieves Guild contacts a player-character thief, offering gems at 60% of their value. They were stolen in the area, so they cannot be resold within fifty miles without recutting, but he has heard that the party are heading out on a long expedition, to an area where the gems can be sold for their full value as 'adventuring plunder'. The gems may or may not be stolen, but since the player character cannot have them valued except by the Thieves Guild he will not know that the price being demanded is 200% of the gems' value until he gets well away from the town, by which time the NPC will have discarded his disguise and be untraceable.

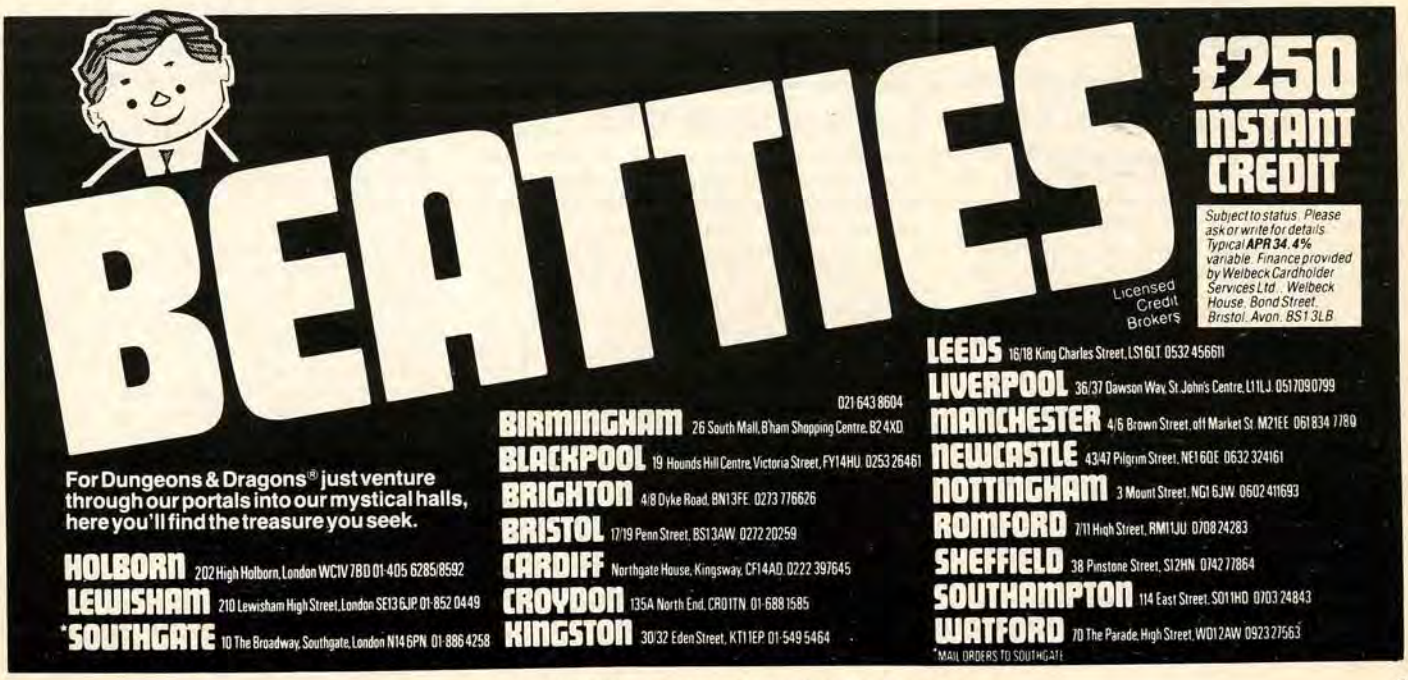
Palming Gems: A dishonest jeweller may swop a real gem for a similar-looking fake while he's evaluating the gems. The gem will be in the middle range of those he's valuing, and match closely one of the stock of fakes that all such jewellers keep. At this point he will either refuse to purchase the gems, or will point out the fake — 'generously' paying full price for the others.

Distracting Robbery: An NPC thief arranges for the PCs to raid a jeweller's (goldsmith's, furrier's, etc) at a particular time when he can guarantee that the City Guard will be looking the other way (and the NPC has an alibi). The NPC will provide the distraction and bribe the guards to look the other way through his contacts, in return for a share of the loot. In fact, he tips the Guard off about the raid by using an agent as a 'man in the street' who sees something suspicious at the jeweller's. He also arranges and fouls up six other raids at the same time, and while the Guard are running around like headless chickens arresting burglars, preventing riots, guarding shops and investigating fake sightings, he calmly assembles his own team for a raid on the Tax Office vaults.

Remember, to work well a confidence trick should be believeable, so all the above ideas can be used as ordinary scenarios, without the trick elements. The rules to work by are simple; research your plot well, aim your plot at somebody who will be interested, keep it consistent and believeable, and don't be greedy. Never use a trick after it's been 'blown'.

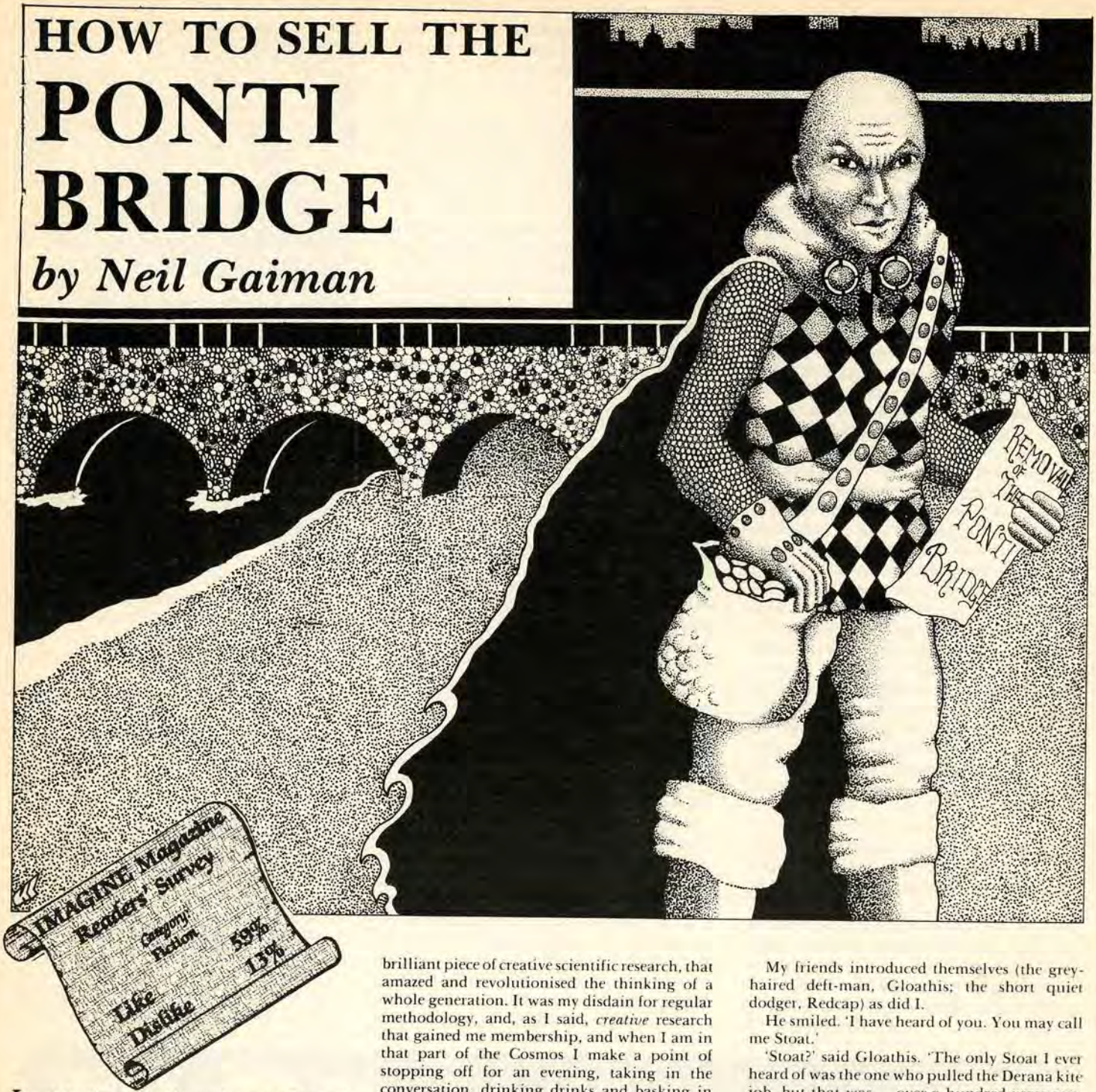
And finally, let your motto be that there is always another way to separate a fool from his money. ***Chris Felton***

*See **How to Sell the Ponti Bridge** overleaf for an example of another scam...*


BEATTIES
£250 INSTANT CREDIT
Subject to status. Please ask or write for details. Typical APR 34.4% variable. Finance provided by Welbeck Cardholder Services Ltd., Welbeck House, Bond Street, Bristol, Avon, BS1 3LB.
Licensed Credit Brokers
For Dungeons & Dragons® just venture through our portals into our mystical halls, here you'll find the treasure you seek.
HOLBORN 202 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BD 01-405 6285/8592
LEWISHAM 210 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6JP 01-852 0449
*SOUTHGATE 10 The Broadway, Southgate, London N14 6PN 01-886 4258
BIRMINGHAM 021 643 8604 26 South Mall, B'ham Shopping Centre, B2 4XD
BLACKPOOL 19 Hounds Hill Centre, Victoria Street, FY1 4HU 0253 26461
BRIGHTON 4/8 Dyke Road, BN1 3FE 0273 776626
BRISTOL 17/19 Penn Street, BS1 3AW 0272 20259
CARDIFF Northgate House, Kingsway, CF1 4AD 0222 397645
CROYDON 135A North End, CR0 1TN 01-688 1585
KINGSTON 30/32 Eden Street, KT1 1EP 01-549 5464
LEEDS 16/18 King Charles Street, LS1 6LT 0532 456611
LIVERPOOL 36/37 Dawson Way, St. John's Centre, L1 1LJ 051 709 0799
MANCHESTER 4/6 Brown Street, off Market St. M2 1EE 061 834 7789
NEWCASTLE 43/47 Pilgrim Street, NE1 6DE 0632 324161
NOTTINGHAM 3 Mount Street, NG1 6JW 0602 411693
ROMFORD 7/11 High Street, RM1 1JU 0708 24283
SHEFFIELD 38 Pinstone Street, S1 2HN 0742 77864
SOUTHAMPTON 114 East Street, SO1 1HD 0703 24843
WATFORD 70 The Parade, High Street, WD1 2AW 0923 27563
*MAIL ORDERS TO SOUTHGATE

HOW TO SELL THE PONTI BRIDGE

by Neil Gaiman



In all the Seven Worlds, my favourite Rogues' Club is still the oldest and the most exclusive. The Lost Carnadine Rogues' Club was formed by a bundle of rogues, cheats, scoundrels and con-men almost seventy thousand years ago. It has been copied many times, in many places (there was even one formed recently — less than five hundred years ago, at any rate — in the City of London) but none of the other Clubs matches the Lost Carnadine for luxury, for atmosphere, for the select membership. To join, one must have pulled a great con, swindle, or similar work of roguery; you will understand the magnificence of the membership when I tell you than I myself have seen, in its many rooms, such notables as Daraxius Lo (who sold the Kzem a frogbat on a holy day), Prottle (who sold the Palace of the King of Vandaria to the King of Vandaria), and so-called Lord Niff (who, it is rumoured, invented the fox twist; the cheat that broke the bank of the Casino Grande).

A high bunch: I am sure you have heard of some of them, of their actions. Not under those names, of course, but the touch is distinctive, no? I myself gained membership by means of a brilliant piece of creative scientific research, that amazed and revolutionised the thinking of a whole generation. It was my disdain for regular methodology, and, as I said, *creative* research that gained me membership, and when I am in that part of the Cosmos I make a point of stopping off for an evening, taking in the conversation, drinking drinks and basking in the presence of my moral equals.

It was late in the evening, and the log fire was burning low in the hearth as we sat and drank fine blue wine in the great hall. 'Of course,' one of my friends was saying, 'there are some scams that no self-respecting rogue would ever touch, they are so old, classless and tired. Selling a tourist the Ponti Bridge, for example.'

'It's the same with Nelson's Column, or the Eiffel Tower, from my homeworld,' I told him. 'However, one could rest assured that no-one who ever indulged in scams like selling the Ponti Bridge would ever be able to join a club like this.'

'No?' said a quiet voice behind me. 'How strange. I do believe it was the time I sold the Ponti Bridge that gained me membership of this club.'

We turned to see a tall gentleman, quite bald and most exquisitely dressed; he leaned against a nearby wall and sipped an imported rhum-fruit. He smiled at the effect he had created, and walked over to us, pulled up a cushion and sat down.

'I don't believe we've met.'

My friends introduced themselves (the grey-haired deft-man, Gloathis; the short quiet dodger, Redcap) as did I.

He smiled. 'I have heard of you. You may call me Stoat.'

'Stoat?' said Gloathis. 'The only Stoat I ever heard of was the one who pulled the Derana kite job, but that was.... over a hundred years ago. What am I thinking of? You adopted the name as a tribute, I presume.'

'As you say,' said Stoat. 'It would be impossible for me to be the same man.' He smiled. 'You were talking about the sale of the Ponti Bridge.'

'We were.'

'You feel that selling the Ponti Bridge is a measly scam, not worthy of a member of this club? Very well, let us examine the ingredients of a good scam.' He ticked the points off on his fingers as he spoke. '*Firstly*: the scam must be credible. *Secondly*: it must be simple — the more complex, the more chance of error. *Thirdly*: when the sucker is stung he must be stung in such a way as to prevent him from ever turning to the law. *Fourthly*: the mainspring of a worthwhile con is human greed, and human vanity. *Lastly*: it must involve trust — confidence, if you will.'

'Surely,' said Gloathis.

'So what you are saying is that the sale of the Ponti Bridge — or any other major landmark not yours to sell — will not have these characteristics. Gentlemen, gentlemen... let me tell you my story.

'I had arrived in Ponti almost penniless, some years ago. I had but thirty gold crowns and I needed a million. Why? That is another story. I took stock of myself — I had those gold crowns, some smart robes, I was fluent in the aristocratic Ponti dialect, and I am brilliant. However, I could think of no Games that would give me the kind of money that I had to have in the time I had to have it by. Unable to think of anything, and trusting to my gods to bring me inspiration, I went on a guided tour of the city...

Ponti lies to the South and the East, a free city and port at the foot of the Mountains of Dawn, built on both sides of the impressive Bay of Dawn. Spanning the Bay is the Bridge, which was built of jewels, mortar and magic, nearly two thousand years ago. There were jeers when it was first planned and begun, for none credited that a structure almost half a mile across could ever be successfully completed or would ever stand for long once erected. But the Bridge was completed, and the jeers turned to cries of awe; it stretched across the Bay of Dawn, a flashing, shining structure, that glinted myriad rainbow colours in the noon sun.

The tour guide paused at the foot of it. 'As you can see, ladies and gentlemen, upon close examination, the Bridge is built entirely of precious stones — rubies, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chryolanths, carbuncles and such — and they are bound together by a transparent mortar, which was crafted by the twin sages Hrolfgar and Hrylthfgur out of a primal magic. The jewels are all real — make no mistake about that — and were gathered from all over the world by Emmidus, King of Ponti at that time.'

A small boy near the front turned to his mother and announced loudly 'We did him in school. He's called Emmidus the Last, because there weren't any more after him! And they told us...'

The tour guide added quickly, 'The young man is quite correct. In obtaining the jewels King Emmidus bankrupted the City-state, and set the scene for our current beneficent Ruling Enclave to appear.'

The small boy's mother was twisting the small boy's ear, which cheered the tour guide up immensely. 'Of course, I'm sure you all know that con-men and smartboys are always trying to play tourists (normally rich tourists) for mugs, by telling them that they are representing the Ruling Enclave, which owns the city-state, and thus the Bridge as well, and they are entitled to sell the bridge. They get a hefty deposit then scarper. To clarify matters,' he said, and he and the tourists chuckled together, 'the bridge is, uh, not for sale.' It was a good line, and it never failed to get a laugh.

His party started to make its way across the Bridge. Only the small boy noticed that one of their number had stayed behind — a tall, aristocratic man. Quite bald. He stood at the foot of the Bridge, lost in contemplation.

'Not for sale, eh?' he said to himself. He turned, abruptly, and walked back to the city.

They were playing a game not unlike tennis, with large, heavy strung racquets, and jewelled skulls for balls. The skulls were so *satisfying* in the way they *thunked* when hit cleanly, in the way they curved in great looping parabolas across the marble court. The skulls had never grown on human shoulders; they had been obtained, at great loss of life, from a demon-race in the highlands, and afterwards jewelled (emeralds and sweet rubies, set in a lacy silver filigree in the eyesockets and about the jawbone) in Carthus' own workshops.

It was Carthus' serve.

He reached for the next skull in the pile and held it up to the light, marvelling at the craftsmanship, in the way that the jewels, when struck by the light at a certain angle, seemed to glow with an inner luminescence. He could have told you the value and probable provenance of each jewel — perhaps the very mine from which it had been dug. The skulls were also beautiful; the bone was a milky mother-of-pearl, translucent and fine; each had cost him more than the value of the jewels set in its fine-boned face. The demon-race had now all but died out, and the skulls were well-nigh irreplaceable.

He lobbed the skull over the net. Aathia struck it neatly back at him, forcing him to run (his footsteps echoing on the cold marble floor) to meet it and — *thunk* — hit it back to her.

She almost made it. Almost, but not quite. The skull eluded her racquet and fell towards the stone floor, and then, only half an inch above the ground, it stopped, bobbing slightly, as if immersed in liquid or a magnetic field.

It was magic, of course, and Carthus had paid most highly for it. He could afford it.

'My point, lady,' he said, bowing low.

Aathia — his partner in all but bed — said nothing; her eyes glinted like chips of ice, or the jewels that were the only things she loved. They made a strange pair, Carthus and Aathia. There was a discreet cough from behind them. Carthus turned, to behold a white-tunicked slave holding outstretched a parchment scroll. 'Yes?' sighed Carthus, wiping the sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

'A message, lord. The man who left it said it was urgent.'

Carthus grunted. 'Who is it from?'

'I have not inspected it, lord. It is for your eyes, and the eyes of the Lady Aathia, and none other.'

Carthus stared at the parchment scroll, but made no move to take it. He was a big man, with a fleshy face, sandy receding hair, and a worried expression. His business rivals — and there were many, for Ponti had become, over the years, the centre of the wholesale jewel business — had learned that his expression held no clue to his inner feelings. In many cases it had cost them money to learn this.

'Take the message, Carthus,' sighed Aathia, and when he did not she walked around the net herself and plucked the scroll from the slave's fingers. 'Leave us,' she instructed.

The slave's bare feet were soundless on the chill marble floor.

She broke the seal herself with her sleeve-knife, and unrolled the parchment. Her eyes flicked over it once, fairly fast, then again at a slower pace. She whistled. 'Here...' Carthus took it and read it through.

'I — I don't really know what to make of it,' he said in a high, petulant voice. With his racquet he rubbed, absent-mindedly, at the small criss-cross scar on his right cheek. The pendant that hung at his neck (proclaiming him one of the High Council of the Ponti Jewel Merchants' Guild) stuck, briefly, to his sweaty skin, and then swung free. 'What do you think, my dear?'

'I am not your "dear".'

'Of course not, ah, lady.'

'Better, Carthus. We'll make a true citizen of you yet. Well, for a start, the name is obviously false. "*Glew Croll*" indeed! There are more men named Glew Croll in Ponti than there are diamonds in your safes. The address is obviously rented accommodation. There was also no ring-mark on the wax seal; it's as if he's gone out of his way to maintain anonymity.'

'Yes, I could see all that. But what about this "business opportunity" he talks about. And if it is — as he says — Ruling Enclave business, then would it be carried on with the secrecy he requests...?

She shrugged. 'Reading between the lines, it would seem that there is a great deal of wealth involved.'

Carthus was silent. he reached down to the skull-pile, leaned his racquet and the scroll against it, then picked up a large skull. He caressed it gently with his blunt, stubby fingers. 'You know,' he said, as if speaking to the skull, 'this could be my chance to get the rest of the bastards on the High Council of the Guild. Dead blood aristocrat half-wits!'

'There speaks the son of a slave,' said Aathia, drily. 'If it wasn't for my name you would never have made Council membership.'

'Shut up.' His expression was vaguely worried, which meant nothing at all. 'I can show them. I'm going to show them. You'll see.'

He hefted the skull lightly in his right hand, as if testing the weight of it, basking in (and computing) the value of the bone, the jewels, the fine-worked silver. Then he spun around (surprisingly fast for one so big) and threw the skull with all his might at a far pillar, well beyond the field of play. It seemed to hang in the air for ever, and then, with almost painful slowness, it hit the pillar and smashed into a thousand fragments. The almost-musical tinkling sounds it made as it did so were very beautiful.

'I'll go and change to meet the Glew Croll, then,' muttered Carthus. He walked off, carrying the scroll with him. Aathia stared after him, and then she clapped her hands, summoning a slave to clear up the mess.

Two hours later Carthus arrived in a fairly anonymous area of the Undercliffs — the caves that honeycomb the rock under and in the Bay of Dawn, far below the Bridge itself. He took his clothes off at the door, handing them to his slave, and walked down the narrow stone steps. His flesh gave an involuntary shiver as he entered the water (kept just below blood-heat, in the aristocratic manner, but still chill after the heat of the day) and swam down the corridor into an anteroom. Reflected light glimmered across the walls; on the water floated four other men and two women. They lounged on large wooden floats, elegantly carved.

Carthus swam over to an empty float and hauled his bulk onto it. Like the other six he wore nothing but a Jewellers' Guild High Council pendant. All the High Council members, bar one, were there.

'Where's the President?' he asked, of no-one in particular.

The skull seem to hang in the air forever, and then, with almost painful slowness, it hit the pillar and smashed into a thousand fragments

A skeletal woman with flawless white skin pointed to one of the inner rooms. Then she yawned and twisted her body; a rippling twist, at the end of which she was off the float — hers was carved into the shape of a giant swan — and deep in the water. Carthus envied her and hated her: that twist had been one of the twelve so-called "noble" dives; he knew that, despite having practised for years, he could not hope to emulate it.

'Effete bitch,' he muttered under his breath. Still, it was reassuring to see the other Council members here. He wondered if any of them knew anything he didn't.

There was a splashing behind him, and he turned. Wommet, the Guild President was clutching Carthus' float. They bowed to each

other, then Wommet (a small hunchback, whose everso many times great-grandfather had made his fortune bringing King Emmidus the jewels that bankrupted Ponti, and thus laid the foundations for the Ruling Enclave's 2,000 year rule) said 'You next, messire Carthus. Down the first corridor: it's the first room you come to.'

Carthus suppressed an urge to ask the Hunchback what it was all about, and clambered off his float. The water stung his eyes.

To his surprise he found himself climbing up steps to the room: it was dry, and dark and smoky. One lamp shone fitfully on the desk. The man behind the desk was standing in the shadows, but even in the half-light, Carthus could see that he was tall and totally bald.

'I bid you good day,' said a cultured voice.

'And on your house and kin also,' responded Carthus.

'Sit down, sit down. You are here on the business of the Ruling Enclave, as you may have inferred from the message I sent you. I must ask you, before we go any further, to read and sign this oath of secrecy. Take all the time you need.' He pushed a scroll across the table. It was a fairly comprehensive oath, pledging Carthus to secrecy about all matters discussed with the meeting on pain of the Ruling Enclave's "extreme displeasure" — a polite euphemism for death. Carthus read it through a couple of times. 'It... it isn't anything illegal, is it?'

'Sir!' The cultured voice was offended. Carthus shrugged his great shoulders and signed. The scroll was removed from his fingers and placed in a trunk in the far corner of the room. 'Very good. We can get down to business, then. Something to drink? Smoke? Inhale? No? Very well.'

There was a pause.

'As you will have guessed, Glew Croll is not my name. I am a junior administrative member of the Ruling Enclave.' (Carthus grunted and scratched his ear.) 'Messire Carthus, what do you know of the Bridge of Ponti?'

'Same as everyone. National landmark. Tourist attraction. Very impressive if you like that kind of thing. Built of jewels and magic. Jewels aren't all of the highest quality, although there's a rose-diamond at the centre big as a baby's fist, flawless...'

'Very good. Have you ever heard of "magical half-life"?'

'Well... I've heard the term.'

'A magical half-life, messire, is the nigromantic term for the length of time a magician, wizard, witch or whatever's magic lasts after his or her death. A humble hedge-wizard's magic, conjurations and so on will often disappear on the moment of his death. At the other end of the scale you have such phenomena as the Sea-Serpent Sea, in which the purely magical sea-serpents still frolic and bask almost nine thousand years after the death of Cilimwah Lih, their creator.'

'Right, that, yes. I knew that.'

'Good. Then you will understand the import when I tell you that the half-life of the Ponti Bridge — according to our chiefest sages — is little more than two thousand years. Soon, messire, it will begin to crumble and collapse.'

The fat jeweller gasped. 'But that's terrible. If the news got around...' He trailed off, mentally weighing up the implications.

'Precisely. There would be panic. Trouble. The news cannot be allowed to leak out before we are ready, hence this secrecy.'

'I think I will have a drink, please,' muttered Carthus.

'Very wise.' The bald noble unstoppered a crystal flagon and poured clear blue wine into a goblet. He passed it across the table, and continued, 'Any jeweller — and there are only seven in Ponti, and perhaps two elsewhere who could cope with the volume — who gained the Ponti Bridge would gain back whatever he paid for it in publicity alone, even forgetting the value of the jewels. It is my task to see the world's eight largest wholesale jewellers about this. As you can imagine, if the jewels were all released at once in Ponti they would be almost worthless. In exchange for entire ownership of the Bridge, the jeweller would have to undertake to build a structure beneath it, and as it crumbles he or she would collect the jewels and undertake to sell no more than half a percent within the city walls. You, as a partner of Carthus and Aathia, are one of the eight people I have been appointed to see.'

The jeweller shook his head. It just seemed too good to be true — *if* he could get it! 'Tell me more,' he said, betraying no interest in his voice.

'I am but a humble servant of the Enclave, who, after all, want to make a profit on the deal. Each of you will submit a tender for the Bridge, via myself, to the Enclave. There is to be no conferring between you. The Enclave will choose the best offer, and then, in open and formal Enclave Session the winner will be announced, and then — and only then — will he pay his money into the City treasury. Most of it, as I understand things, will go towards the building of another bridge (out of more mundane materials, I suspect) and toward paying for a boat-ferry for the citizenry while there is no bridge.'

'I see.'

The tall man stared at Carthus; the jeweller felt as if hard eyes were boring into his soul. 'You have five days to submit your tender, Carthus. Let me warn you of two things. Firstly if there is any collaboration between any of you jewellers you will incur the Enclave's extreme displeasure. Secondly if *anybody* finds out about the spell fatigue, then we will not waste time in finding out which of you jewellers opened his mouth too widely and not too well. The Guild Council will be replaced with another Council, and your business will be annexed by the Enclave — perhaps to be offered as prizes in the next Autumn Games. Is my meaning plain?'

Carthus' voice was gravel in his throat. 'Yes.'

'Go then. Your tender in five days, remember. Send another in.'

Carthus left the room as if in a dream, croaked 'He wants you now' to the nearest High Council member in the anteroom and soon found himself outside in the sunlight and fresh air. Far above him the jewelled heights of the Ponti Bridge stood, as they had stood glimmering and twinkling down on the town for the last two thousand years.

He squinted: was it his imagination, or were the jewels less bright, the whole structure subtly less magnificent than before? Was the air of permanence that had hung about the Bridge beginning to fade away? It was as if he had never seen it before. Mentally he began to calculate the value of the Bridge in terms of probable jewel-weight and volume, and wondering how Aathia would treat him if he presented her with the rose-diamond at the summit. And the High Council would no longer be able to view him as a *nouveau riche* upstart, if he was the man who bought the Ponti Bridge.

They would treat him better; there was no doubt of that.

One by one, the man who called himself 'Glew Croll' saw the jewel merchants. Each reacted in his or her own way — shock, laughter, sorrow, gloom — at the news of the spell-fatigue in the binding of the Ponti Bridge. Each of them began to calculate profits and fame, mentally judge and rejudge possible tenders, activate spies in rival jewellers' houses.

Carthus himself told no-one anything, not even his beloved, unattainable Aathia; he locked himself up in his study and wrote tenders, tore them up, wrote tenders again. The rest of the jewellers were similarly occupied.

* * * * * * * * * *

The fire had burnt out in the Rogues' Club, leaving but a few glowing embers in a bed of grey ash, and dawn was playing silver fingers across the sky. Gloathis, Redcap and myself stared at the man who called himself Stoat as he paused in his narrative. Then he leaned back on his cushion and grinned.

'So there you have it, gentleman,' he said. 'A perfect scam, eh?'

I glanced at Gloathis and Redcap; I was relieved to see they looked as blank as I felt.

'I'm sorry,' said Redcap, 'I just don't see...'

'You don't see, eh? And you, Gloathis? Do you see, or are your eyes covered by thick mud?'

Gloathis half-smiled. 'Well... you obviously convinced them all you were a representative of the Enclave. Having them all meet in the anteroom was an inspired idea. But what I fail to see is the profit in it for you. From what you've told them none of them would pay the money to you — they are waiting for an open announcement, and then to pay their money into the public treasury...'

Stoat raised an eyebrow. 'You think like a mug,' he said flatly. He looked at me, and I shook my head. 'And you call yourself rogues!'

Redcap looked exasperated. 'I just don't see the profit in it! Fair enough... you tell them the money is going to the Enclave... you've spent your 30 gold coins on renting the offices and sending the messages. Where the hell does this million come from?'

It was then that I realised, and started to laugh. I could feel my face going red with the effort of trying to keep it in, and I began to splutter. I was holding my sides and rolling on the floor; I almost choked I laughed so hard; I reached out for Stoat, and then began to laugh again. I laughed so hard I couldn't breathe and the other two (Stoat just stared on impassively) patted me on the back and poured water down my neck. 'Oh, priceless, priceless!' I spluttered. 'I see it all now!' Eventually I calmed down, and (feeling weak as a newborn shrew) I crawled on my hands and knees to Stoat; I whispered in his ear. He nodded, and I began to giggle again.

'I am glad that one of you has some perception,' said Stoat. Then he drew his silken robes around him, stood up and swept off down the torch-lined corridors of the Lost Carnadine Rogues' Club, vanishing into the shadows. I stared after him as he left; the other two were staring at me.

'What did he do?' begged Redcap. 'I don't understand!'

'Call yourself rogues?' I asked rhetorically. 'Oh, very well. After the jewellers left his office he let them stew for a few days, letting the tension build and build. Then, secretly, he arranged to see each of the jewellers at different times and in different places — probably low-life taverns.

'And in the tavern he would see the jeweller, and point out the one thing you — and they — had overlooked. The tenders would go to the Enclave via our friend; and he could arrange for the jeweller he was talking to — say Carthus — to put in the winning tender.

For, of course, he *was* open to bribery!'

Gloathis slapped his forehead. 'I'm such an oaf! I should have seen it! He could easily have collected a million gold coins' worth of bribes from those jewellers, and then he'd vanish. The jewellers couldn't complain — if the Enclave knew they'd tried bribing someone they thought to be an Enclave official, they'd be lucky to keep their right arms, let alone their lives and businesses. What a perfect con.'

And there was silence in the Hall of the Rogues' Club: we were lost in contemplation of the brilliance of the Man who Sold the Ponti Bridge.

Neil Gaiman, co-author, with Kim Newman, of Ghastly Beyond Belief, a collection of the worst-ever SF quotes.

Another time...another place...
Out of the heavens a new kingdom is born

The Legends of Skyfall 1

MONSTERS OF THE MARSH

David Tant **£1.75**

The Legends of Skyfall 2

THE BLACK PYRAMID

David Tant **£1.75**

* Coin-tossing game system
* Logic and intelligence rewarded
* Thousands of options but only *one* sure path to success

Advanced Fantasy Gamebooks from Armada

UNICORN GAMES

6 WOODHAM ROAD, BELLINGHAM, SE6 2SD.
MAIL ORDER ONLY

CHEQUES/PO's PAYABLE TO UNICORN GAMES
RETURNED TO YOU BY FIRST CLASS POST "FREE"
EUROPE: ADD 33% CARRIAGE
OTHER OVERSEAS: ADD 55% CARRIAGE

SEND FOR A "FREE" GAMES LEAFLET.....

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

BASIC SET.....9.50
EXPERT SET.....9.50
COMPANION SET.....9.50
D&D CHARACTER SHEETS.....2.95
B4 THE LOST CITY.....4.50
B5 HORROR ON THE HILL.....4.50
B6 THE VEILED SOCIETY.....4.50
B7 RAHASHIA.....4.50
B8 GHOST OF LION CASTLE.....SOLO.4.50
X2 CASTLE AMBER.....4.50
X5 HORROR ON THE HILL.....4.50
X6 QUAGMIRE.....4.50
X8 LANTHANS GOLD.....SOLO.4.50
XL1 QUEST FOR THE HEARTSTONE.....4.50
CM1 TEST OF THE WARLORDS.....4.50
CM2 DEATHS RIDE.....4.50
CM3 SABRE RIVER.....4.50
M1 BLIZZARD PASS.....SOLO.4.50
M2 MAZE OF THE RIDDLING MINOTAUR...SOLO.4.50

ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

DUNGEON MASTERS GUIDE.....10.95
PLAYERS HANDBOOK.....9.95
MONSTER MANUAL.....9.95
MONSTER MANUAL II.....9.95
FIEND FOLIO.....9.95
DUNGEON MASTERS SCREEN.....4.95
AD&D CHARACTER SHEETS.....3.95
WORLD OF GREYHAWK.....9.50
I1 DWELLERS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY.....4.50
I3 PHARAOH.....4.50
I4 OASIS OF THE WHITE PALM.....4.50
UK2 THE SENTINEL.....4.50
UK3 THE GAUNTLET.....4.50
UK4 WHEN A STAR FALLS.....4.50
UK5 EYE OF SERPENT.....4.50
UK6 ALL THAT GLITTERS.....4.50
WG5 MORDENKANEN'S ADVENTURE.....4.50
DL1 DRAGONS OF DESPAIR.....4.50
DL2 DRAGONS OF FLAME.....4.50
DL3 DRAGONS OF HOPE.....4.50
CB1 CONAN UNCHAINED.....4.50
CB2 CONAN AGAINST DARKNESS.....4.50

WARHAMMER

WARHAMMER BATTLE.revised rules.....9.95
FORCES OF FANTASY.....6.95
CITADEL DICE SET.....1.25

CALL OF CTHULHU

CALL OF CTHULHU BOXED SET.....9.95
SHADOWS OF YOG-SOTHOTH.....8.95
GLOZAL EST AUTHENTIQUE.....6.95
FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH.....8.95
CTHULHU ADVENTURES....25MM.....8.50
CTHULHU MONSTERS.....25MM.....8.50

OTHER ROLE PLAYING GAMES

INDIANA JONES.....9.50
CHILL.....11.95
STAR TREK.....9.95
TRAVELLER STARTER EDITION.....7.95
MIDDLE EARTH ROLE PLAYING.....11.95
RUNEQUEST III:DELUXE SET.....39.95
RUNEQUEST III:GAMEMASTERS SET.....24.95
RUNEQUEST III:PLAYERS SET.....19.95
TOON.....7.95
JAMES BOND:BASIC RULEBOOK.....8.95
GOLDEN HEROS.....8.95
MARVEL SUPERHEROS.....10.50

PAINT SETS

CITADEL COLOUR:PAINT SET1..(9 colours)...4.95
CITADEL COLOUR:PAINT SET2..(9 colours)...4.95

BOXED 25MM MINIATURES FROM CITADEL

REGIMENTS OF RENOWN.....EACH BOX.4.50
STARTER SET:ADVENTURERS.....3.95
STARTER SET:MONSTERS.....3.95
WHITE DWARF CHARACTERS.....3.95
WARRIORS OF CHAOS.....3.95
ATTACK OF THE BROO.....3.95
BROO II.....3.95
TROGLODYTES.....3.95
LIZARD WARRIORS.....3.95
ORIENTAL HEROS.....4.95

BOXED 25MM MINIATURES FROM GRENADIER

SKELETONS RAIDERS OF THE UNDEAD.....8.50
MONSTERS OF MYTHOLOGY.....8.50
DWARVES TROOP.....5.95
ORCS OF THE SEVERED HAND.....5.95
DRAGON KILLERS.....5.95
KNIGHTS FIGHTERS AND MEN-AT-ARMS.....8.50
TRAVELLER:ADVENTURERS.....8.50
IMPERIAL MARINES.....8.50

interzone

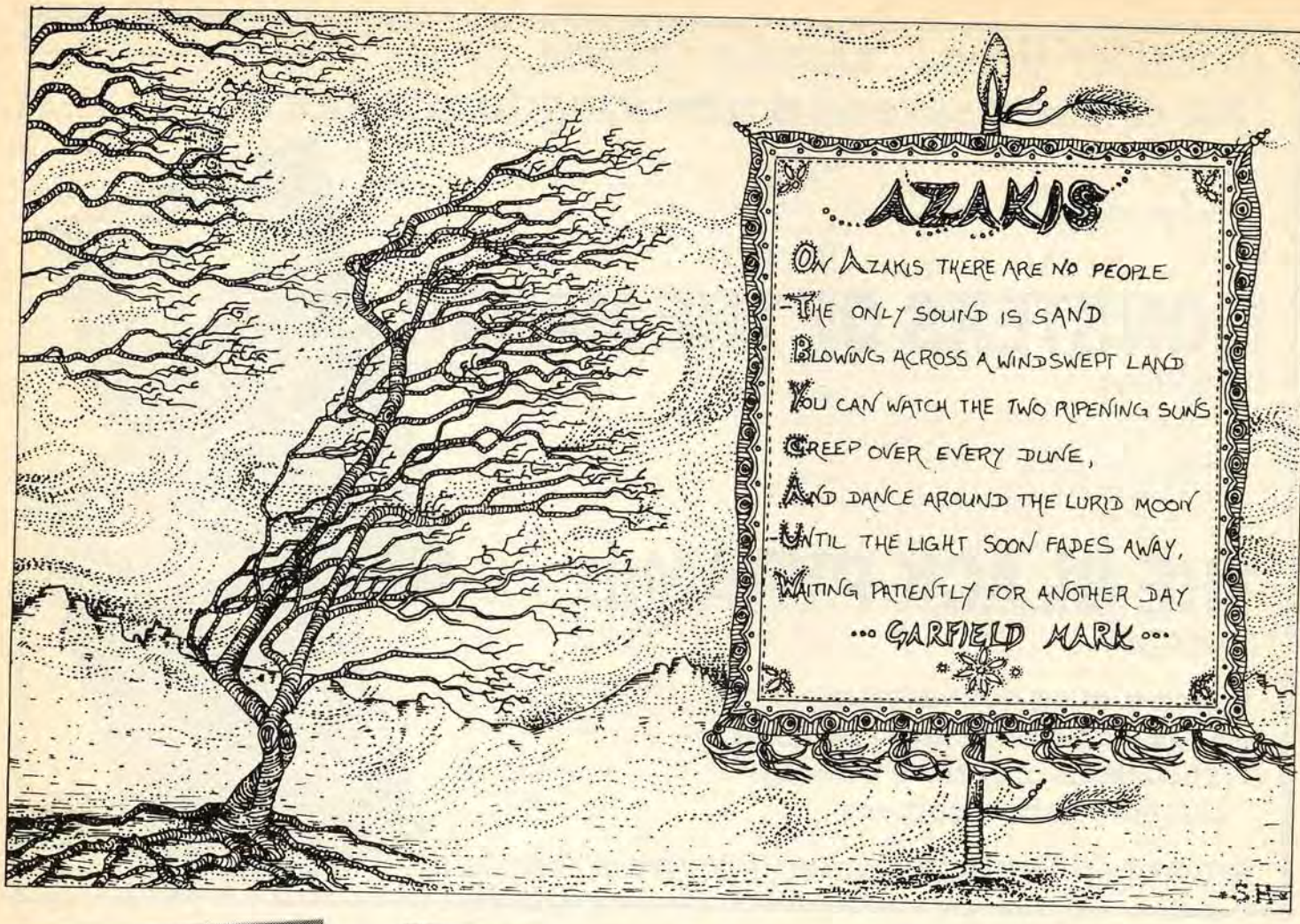
THE MAGAZINE OF IMAGINATIVE FICTION

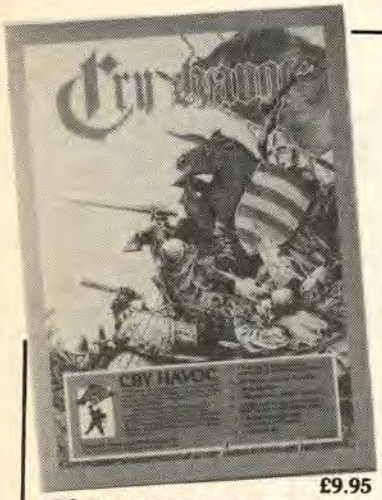
Quarterly £1.25

- *Interzone* is the only British magazine specializing in science fiction and new fantastic writing. *Interzone* has published:

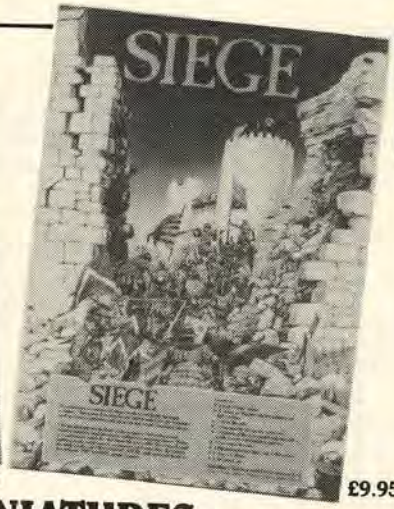
BRIAN ALDISS	M. JOHN HARRISON
J.G. BALLARD	GARRY KILWORTH
ANGELA CARTER	MICHAEL MOORCOCK
RICHARD COWPER	KEITH ROBERTS
JOHN CROWLEY	JOHN SLADEK
PHILIP K. DICK	BRUCE STERLING
THOMAS M. DISCH	CHERRY WILDER

- "The most exciting development in this area of British publishing for over a decade." *City Limits*
- "*Interzone* is breaking new ground." *Computer Talk*
- *Interzone* is available from specialist sf shops only, or by subscription. For 4 issues, send £5 (outside UK, £6) to: **124 Osborne Road, Brighton BN1 6LU, UK.** Single copies: **£1.50 inc. p&p.**


AZAKIS
On Azakis there are no people
The only sound is sand
Blowing across a windswept land
You can watch the two ripening suns
Creep over every dune,
And dance around the lurid moon
Until the light soon fades away,
Waiting patiently for another day
... GARFIELD MARK ...



£9.95



£9.95

STANDARD MINIATURES MEDIEVAL (25mm)

Ideal for use with Cry Havoc and Siege. Scenario Book 1 with six extra exciting scenarios for Cry Havoc, which includes invaluable conversions chart, which enables the use of Standard Miniatures for Cry Havoc and Siege. Send s.a.e. for catalogue of miniatures and full colour brochure illustrating the fantastic range of wargaming accessories and unqiue strategy games.

STANDARD GAMES
& PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

For FREE BROCHURE on all our products, send s.a.e. to Standard Games, Arlon House, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts. Tel: 09277 68328

USA Wargames, 1410 Promenade Bank Centre, Richardson, Texas 75080. Tel: 214 241 3425

DRAGONROAR©

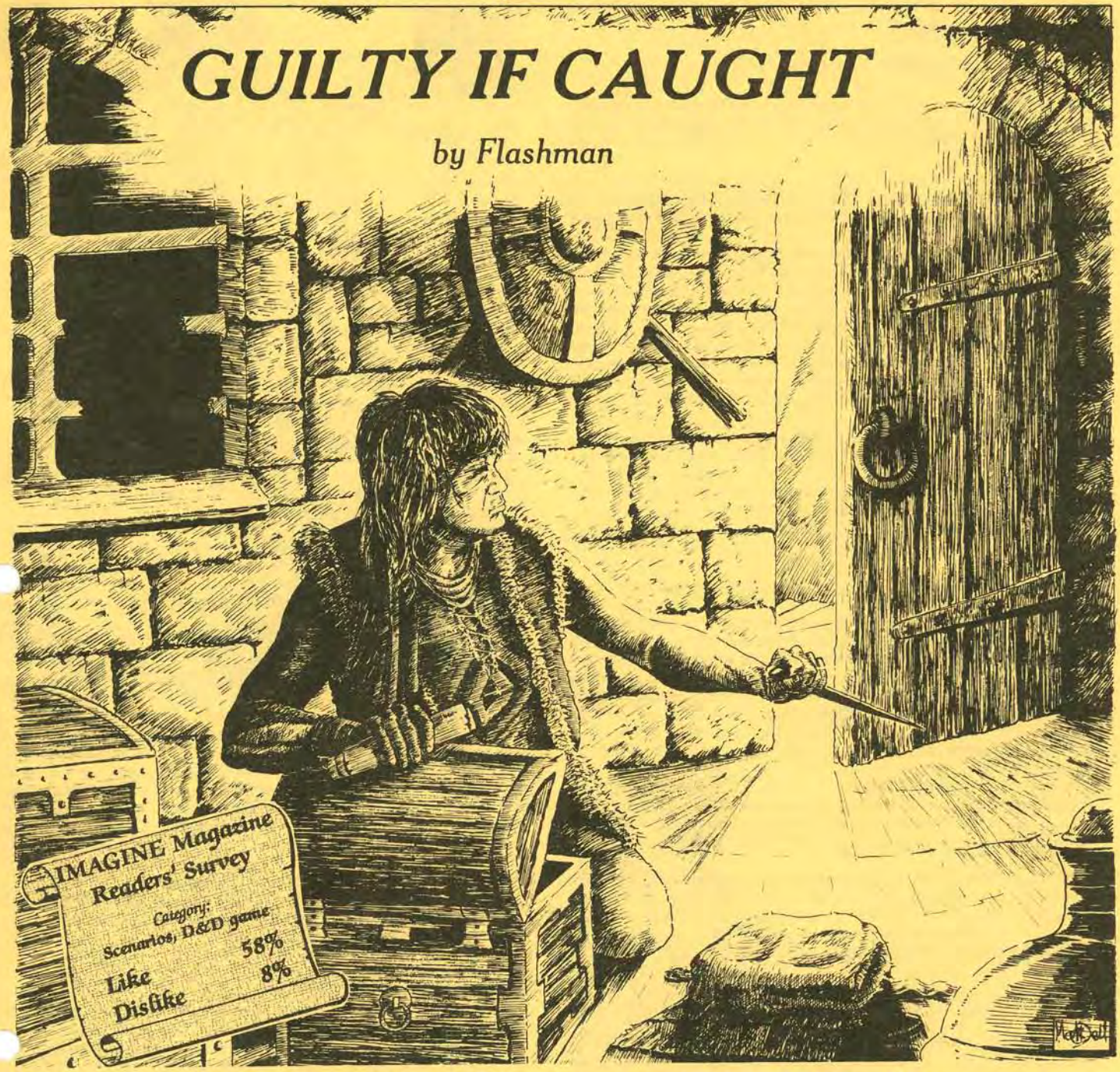
THE COMPLETE FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAME

£12.95 Cassette tape (60 min). Side A, introduction to rule book and components. Side B, solo adventure "A Matter of Honour". Full colour counters, wizards, warriors and monsters. Four play sheets, 24 Character/Monster sheets, floor plan for party adventure Kalonth Dive, set of 6 polyhedral dice and 1 mapping sheet.

Im 24 ADfD Thieves.

GUILTY IF CAUGHT

by Flashman



*A **D&D**® mini-module for sheepbiters, picaroons and other sticky-fingered types.*

General Introduction

Guilty If Caught is a collection of three 'jobs' suitable for one or two thieves. The separate sections are not directly-linked parts of the same adventure, but each is an outline of a target worthy of a skilful thief. However, the 'mini-mini-adventures' are connected in the sense that they are all the sort of escapades that a typical Thieves' Guild would undertake and assign to its members for completion.

The DM will need access to copies of the **D&D® Basic** and **Expert** sets, and will find access to the **Companion** rules useful — in particular the unarmed combat rules. Use of these combat rules is recommended with Thief characters.

Where monster and NPC statistics are presented in the text they appear in the following order:

Name: AC — Armour Class; HD — Hit Dice or Class & Level; hp — Hit Points; MV — Movement Rate; #AT — Number of Attacks per round; D — Damage caused per attack; Save as — Saving Throw equivalent; ML — Morale Level; AL — Alignment; XP — Experience Point value; WR — Wrestling Rating (see **Players Companion**, p7); THACO — To Hit Armour Class Zero. This is the roll on 1d20 to hit an opponent with AC 0. In most cases, the roll needed to hit a target can be calculated as THACO minus target's AC.

The Thieves' Guild

All three sections of this module are designed to fit into any campaign background and provide interesting diversions for Thieves when they are not opening chests for parties of avaricious and ungrateful adventurers. It is assumed that the characters taking part in the adventure belong to a Thieves' Guild of some sort, comparable to other types of organised crime cabals — something more than a simple street gang, perhaps a formalised group such as a 'Tong' or a Mafia 'family'.

The Thieves' Guild is a base of activity for the characters, a place where they can live, find security from the arms of the Law, hear about potential targets and learn new skills. The most influential member of the Guild — though not necessarily the most expert at the art of Thievery — is the Guildmaster.

The characters involved in this series of adventures are under the authority of the Guildmaster. He or she runs the business of the Guild, deciding who works and where — which group of pickpockets work in what streets and markets or who takes part in burglaries. The Guildmaster disposes of stolen property and sees that members get a 'fair share' of the rewards. The Guildmaster may also deal with outsiders — as in the missions detailed below. These tasks give the Guildmaster a great deal of influence, as the only one who knows the full details of the Guild's business.

Experience Points

Experience points in the **D&D®** game are usually awarded for overcoming monsters and finding treasure. In these adventures, however, the DM should also award XPs to the character(s) involved in the following manner:

1. Avoiding a creature should be treated in the same manner as if it had been overcome — the characters should get the full XP value of the creature involved.
2. Treasures with a monetary value do not give an automatic 1gp=1XP to the character(s). All treasure should be turned over to the Guildmaster, and the character awarded 25-50% of the value in cash and XP (to reflect the problems of fencing stolen property and the Guild's 'cut'). The players may try to withhold items from the Guildmaster (with the same chance of success as Picking Pockets), in which case they will receive 50-75% of the value of the items. If, however, they are caught engaging in this underhand activity, the characters will forfeit all the money and 90% of the XP value of the goods.
3. At least 10% of all stolen coinage should be turned over to the Guildmaster. The characters receive full XP value for stolen money.
4. If a crime is commissioned by the Guild or an outside contractor (as below), the Thieves assigned to the job will receive a fee which does conform to the 1gp=1XP formula.

The Jobs

The three 'jobs' outlined below are suitable for one or two Thieves at most, and reflect the type of activities that Thieves are best at when not acting as scouts and chest-openers in the wet and cold of some dank dungeon. The relevant special abilities that characters must use to carry out a task — and any modifications to these chances — are given in brackets at relevant points in the text.

Other than vague notes, no background details are given for each of the targets, so that they can be 'dropped in' to a DM's campaign as a diversion for any suitable Thieves. As far as locations are concerned, any suitably sized town or city will do, with one or more (possibly rival) Thieves' Guilds in existence — the City League on Pelinore would do nicely, although this is not specifically Pelinore material.

If, of course, any of the characters are captured as a result of their actions in these adventures, it is up to the DM to determine their chances of escape, the details of any trials and the punishments (summary or otherwise) visited upon them. See **Law and Order, IMAGINE magazine #19** for further ideas.

1. Love, Love, Love — and Money

This adventure outline is for low-level Thieves, certainly no more than 3 levels in total, and no individual character of greater than 2nd level.

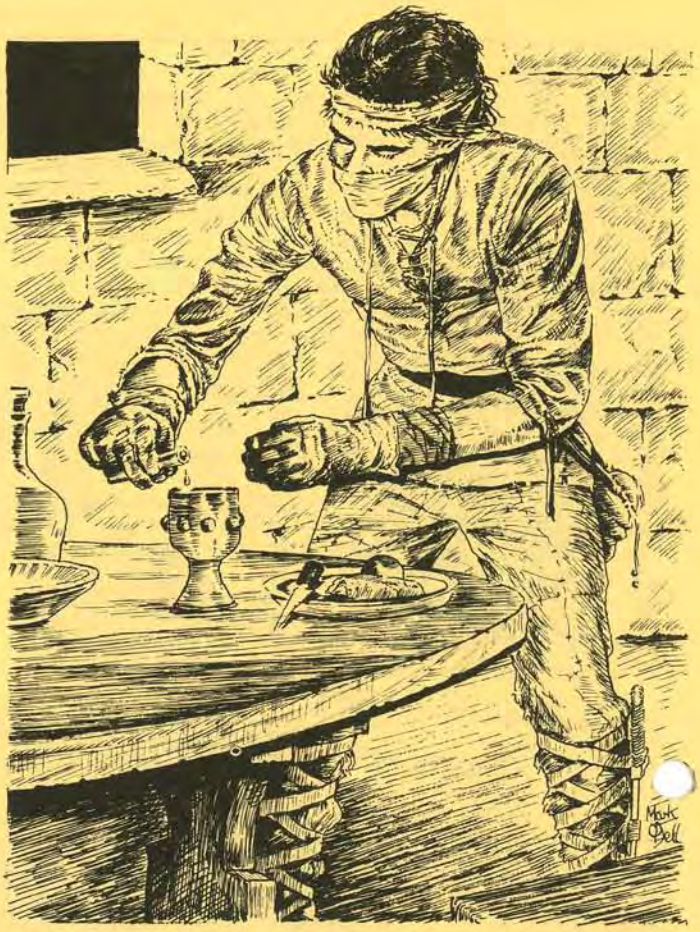
Introduction

Vira Margolis is seventeen years old and an orphan — a sad state of affairs, made even sadder by the fact that it is her responsibility to look after her younger relatives. What makes her burden easier to bear is the fact that she is heir to the not-inconsiderable fortune that her father, Hericuis, accumulated during his years as Chief Magistrate.

Naturally, Vira is a highly desirable young lady, although this is more because of her financial assets than for her own innate charm and beauty. However, Vira is at least intelligent enough to realise this, and treats all her suitors to the same degree of studied indifference.

One of these, Pilor Grewn, is in something of a quandary. He has nothing to recommend him as a husband to Vira, except for an ability to spend money — to date nearly all the fortune his father gave him to stay away from the Grewn estates. He has, however, invested in a two-part potion which, so the travelling apothecary claimed, will cause anyone who imbibes both parts to be smitten with love. Pilor Grewn's only problem is the method of administering the potion to Vira, the owner of the money of he desires, without anyone knowing.

Pilor Grewn has hit upon what he believes to be a clever and original scheme. By paying the Thieves' Guild to ensure that the first half of the potion is given only to Vira, he can then invite the girl to a banquet and safely add the second element to everybody's food. Only Vira will feel the effects, and her hand — and money — will be his!



The Guildmaster has accepted the contract, and has, in turn, chosen the player character(s) for the job. They must break into the Margolis town house and administer a dose of the half-potion to Vira. If possible, the fact that she — and only she — has drunk the compound must be confirmed. No evidence of the 'crime' must be left, and no valuables should be taken from the house (the DM should mention this in passing, rather than labouring the point — the Guildmaster will accept items that happen to stick to any fingers).

The Guildmaster will supply the character(s) with the half-potion (in a small glass vial) and any thieves' tools they require, including tiger's claws (see **Appendix**). The characters have one week to complete the job, and will be paid 200gp each.

On the Night In Question....

This adventure uses the map marked **The Town House**, which represents the home of the Margolis family and their servants. The exact location of this building is left to the DM, but it should be in a reasonably prosperous Merchants' Quarter, or near the legal and administrative centre of the town. It is also assumed that the characters will attempt to break into the house sometime during the night. The DM should feel quite justified in stacking the odds against any characters foolish enough to try a raid in broad daylight, particularly after it has been made clear to them just how busy the streets of this area are.

The house itself is built of good quality stone, and is set slightly back from the street. A large, florid description above the front door declares the ownership of the house, and includes the family motto: *Truth, Justice, Revenge!*.

The ground floor windows are barred, and have iron shutters on the inside — Hericuis was never a Magistrate to be swayed by popular opinion. All the windows have simple locks (+5% Open Locks). The bars are set so closely that only a character whose average of Strength and Constitution are less his or her Dexterity can slip between them.

The walls of the yards and garden are 10' high. The doors in those walls have strong bolts (Remove Traps to shoot the bolts), but no locks.

The external doors of the house (marked with a **1** on the map) have strong locks (-10% Open Locks) and iron bolts, top and bottom (-5% Remove Traps to shoot these bolts from outside). The other external doors into the stables and washhouse do not have locks. The DM should note that the streets around the house are never really empty, even in the dead of night, and any attempt to break into the house from the street will be spotted unless the character(s) Hide in Shadows at the same time. If the characters are spotted, the Watch will be called (see below).

Upstairs windows which Hericuis judged to be vulnerable to the mob are defended in a similar manner to those downstairs. However, the windows which overlook the garden and yards do not have locks and have only wooden shutters. It would be a comparatively simple matter to climb onto one of the lower roof sections and, from there, into the house.

The internal doors of the house have very simple identical locks — one design of key opens them all, but only Vira's door (Vira occupies the front bedroom overlooking the garden) and those downstairs are locked at night. Once a character has successfully used his Open Lock ability (at +15%) on one of the door locks all subsequent attempts are at +50%.

The house is richly furnished (on average there are 1-4 small items — candlesticks, statuettes, mirrors, treen and the like — worth 10-60gp each in every room), although with little evidence of good taste. Hericuis did have a fancy for barbarian workmanship, especially swords and armour. Virtually every room (except Vira's bedroom and the nursery) has examples hanging on the walls: daggers, swords, axes, helmets. These are worth twice the list prices given in the rule books.

In the study is a large coffer (-5% Open Locks), containing Hericuis' magisterial papers and documents, and a purse of 200gp. Hidden in a compartment in the left side of the coffer is a small book which contains a coded list. The compartment has a poison needle in the lid (save vs poison or be paralysed for 1-6 turns). The list gives the names of all those who bribed Hericuis for favourable decisions while he was a Magistrate. The characters will be unable to read this without magical assistance.

Corjise keeps a small bag of mixed coins (10-20gp worth) in his room (the butler's room) as the staff wages. He also has a set of Thieves' Tools — a memento of his younger days.

Vira has a small jewellery case in her bedroom, which contains several fine pieces: a pearl necklace (worth 700gp), an inlaid brooch of silver and jet (worth 200gp), a ceremonial dagger (worth 150gp) and a gold torc of dwarven make (worth 300gp). The lock on the case is broken.

In all, there are 18 members of the Margolis household, including the servants. During daylight hours most rooms of the house are occupied, either by a member of the family or by working servants. Vira generally 'entertains' her suitors and other callers during the afternoon and early evening in the great hall, dining room and drawing room. The children (Vira's younger brothers) are usually kept in the nursery with one of the female staff, or allowed to play in the kitchen. Stabbis, Vira's half-brother, spends much of his time in the study and library.

If the house is entered during the day, the following encounter table to reflect the difficulties of the Thieves remaining undetected:

Daytime encounters

1 in 6 chance of encounter per round (roll every round):*

Die Roll	Encounter (see below for details of characters)
1-7	1-2 Female servants
8	Male Servant
9	Corjise the butler
10	Meerci and Norres (70%), Stabbis (20%) or Vira plus 1-3 suitors (10%)

**If the Thieves do not Move Silently increase this chance to 2 in 6 while they remain within the house. If they are discovered the alarm will be raised one round later, and the Watch will be called unless the involved NPCs are subdued in some manner.*

After midnight the house is much quieter. Only the servant's hall and dormitory, the butler's room, nursery, the bedroom next to the nursery (by Stabbis) and Vira's bedroom are occupied. All but one of the female servants occupy the dormitory, the other sleeps with Corjise. The male servants sleep in the servants' hall — a security measure from Hericuis' days. Downstairs doors are always locked by Corjise and he locks many (50% chance for any particular door) of those upstairs as well.

Vira tends to retire early, and she is a heavy sleeper (+30% Move Silently in or near her bedroom). Her door is always locked. She does, however, always wake around dawn, so a light breakfast of cheese, bread, honey, a smoked sausage or two, fruit, oatcakes and a flagon of small beer is laid out in her room. If the Thieves can reach her bedroom it is a simple matter to add the half-potion they have been given to the flagon.

Quietly moving about the house will not arouse anyone, unless the wrong bedroom is entered. The sound of fighting will, of course, attract attention. The characters should still have to Move Silently, but only a roll of 90%+ indicates any untoward noise. In these circumstances Stabbis or Corjise will investigate the noise. Again, the alarm will be raise 1 round after any intruders are discovered.

Vira: AC 9; HD 1; hp 5; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as NM; ML 7; AL N; XP 10; WR 10; THACO 20; normally unarmed, but 30% carries a ceremonial dagger (D1-4).
Meerci, Norres: AC 9; HD 1; hp 2; MV 120' (40'); #AT nil; D nil; Save as NM; ML 6; AL N; XP 10; WR n/a; THACO n/a; the children will only raise the alarm 25% of the time, as they will regard the intrusion by the characters as a tremendous game.
Stabbis: AC 8; Fighter 3; hp 14; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F3; ML 9; AL L; XP 35; WR 13; THACO 19; S 16 (+2), I 13, W 12, C 10, D 13 (+1), Ch 14; normally carries **bodkin** (dagger) **+2**, also has a **longsword +1** in his bedroom, or uses random weapon and shield taken from wall displays.
Corjise the butler: AC 6; Thief 4; hp 15; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as T4; ML 9; AL N; XP 75; WR 13; THACO 19; S 16 (+2), I 13, W 10, C 10, D 18 (+3), Ch 12; normally unarmed, but will carry a longsword when investigating any noises.
7 female servants: AC 9; HD 1; hp 3; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as NM; ML 5; AL L; XP 10; WR 10; THACO 20; normally unarmed, but will use whatever weapons come to hand at a pinch.
5 male servants: AC 9; HD 1; hp 6; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as NM; ML 7; AL L; XP 10; WR 10; THACO 20; normally unarmed, but have access to shortswords and daggers.
A Watch patrol, 5 constables: AC 5; Fighter 2; hp 10 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F2; ML 9; AL L; XP 20 each; WR 6; THACO 19; the constables are armed with wooden batons (D1-3) and longswords (D1-8). They will arrive 1d8+3 rounds after the alarm has been raised by any members of the household, but will not give chase — their duties are to protect property rather than apprehend criminals.

It is left to the DM to determine the final outcome of this adventure. Does the potion work? Is it actually a fraud? Does Pilor Grewn manage to administer the second half? Does Vira become enamoured of him? And, if all his plottings are successful, does Pilor Grewn takes steps to eliminate those who know of his machinations?

2. The Merest Scrap of Paper

This section of the module is for one or two 4th-6th level characters. Other characters may be used, but the DM should adjust the severity of encounters and the difficulty of using special abilities to reflect the varying skills of the character(s) involved.

Introduction

Two years ago Cleren Gyris issued a guaranteed note of credit against the loss of the *Pelican*, a small river and coastal trader. Cleren was paid 6,000gp, and in return he promised to pay 40,000gp of the 45,000gp value of the ship should it be lost. Foolishly, Cleren did not re-insure the risk, preferring to keep all the money for himself.

Word has reached Cleren that the *Pelican* sank a month ago. This is not yet public knowledge — if it were, Cleren would have to pay up, which poses something of a problem at the moment. Cleren has less than 3,000gp to his name, the rest of his fortune being invested in a variety of risky business ventures. If he now has to pay off the note on the *Pelican*, he will be ruined.

Cleren has decided to seek professional help. The note will have to be 'borrowed' from its current owner, Ven Jharbulus, at least until Cleren has enough money to pay it off properly....

Under the guise of an ordinary burglary, the character(s) must break into Ven Jharbulus' riverside residence and warehouse and remove the note from the office strongbox. They must also take a random selection of other papers, and any valuables they feel it would be prudent to take. The Guildmaster has arranged fees of 500gp, but any stolen items must be surrendered at the end of the job for proper disposal.

Breaking & Entering

Ven Jharbulus' house (see **The Warehouse** map) should be placed in either a Merchants' Quarter or a prosperous docklands area. The house is extremely grand with an imposing frontage that is, in itself, a discrete advertisement for Jharbulus' success as a trader, especially as the surrounding buildings are purely commercial — well cared for, but uninspiring. The crest of a Master of the Merchant Adventurers Guild is prominently carved above every gateway and door.

The building has two distinct halves. The riverside end is purely commercial, with a quay, a small dock, storerooms for a variety of goods (chiefly rare herbs and spices at the moment) and offices. These are functional and disorganised, but scrupulously tidy. The front, built

KEY

DOOR

S SECRET DOOR

MAGICALLY LOCKED DOOR

1 DOOR WITH LOCK RATING

GATEWAY

WINDOWS

PILLARS

U D TRAPDOORS

SU SD SECRET TRAPDOORS

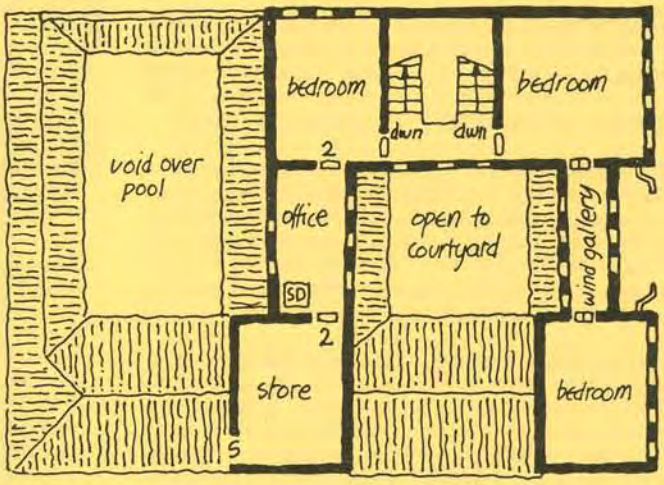
T TRAPDOOR TO SEWER

UP STAIRS

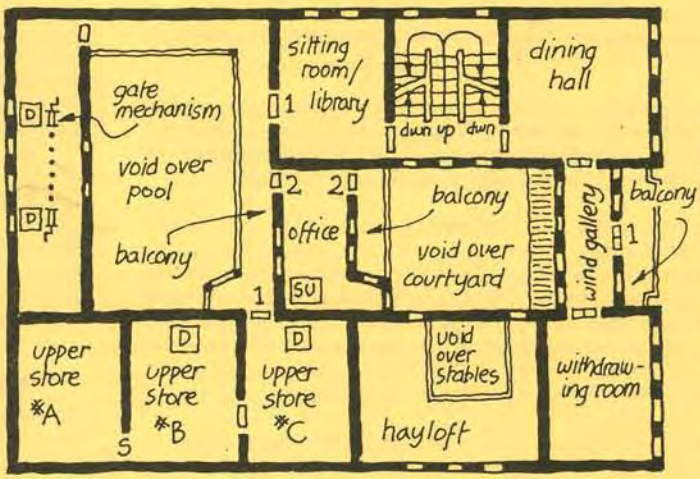
GARDEN/YARD WALL

0 20 40 60 80 FEET

THE WAREHOUSE

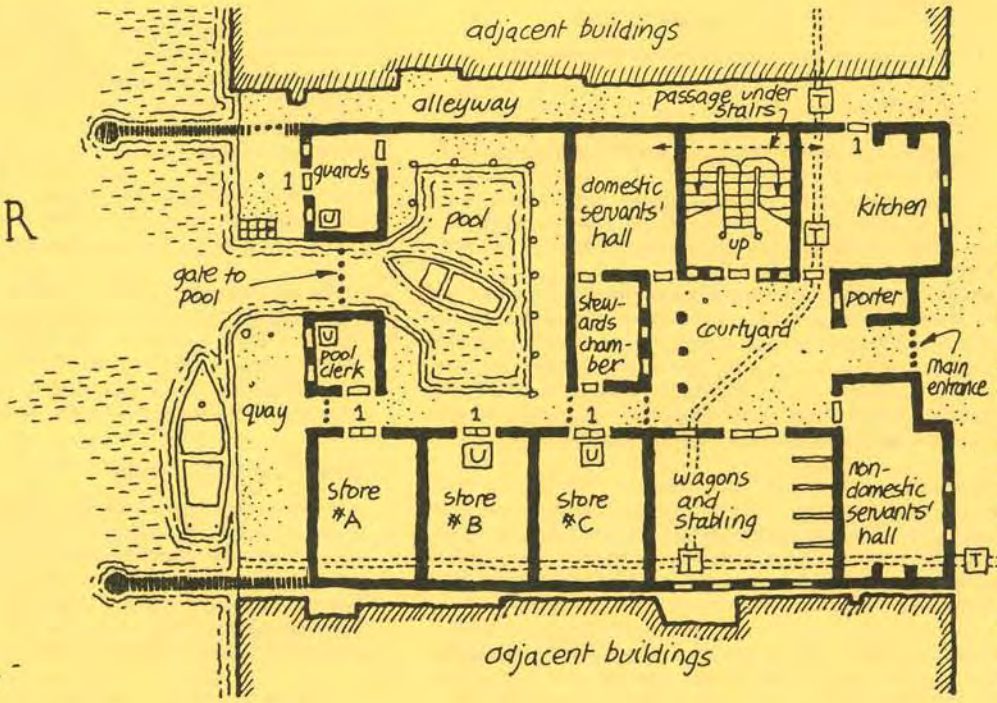


SECOND FLOOR



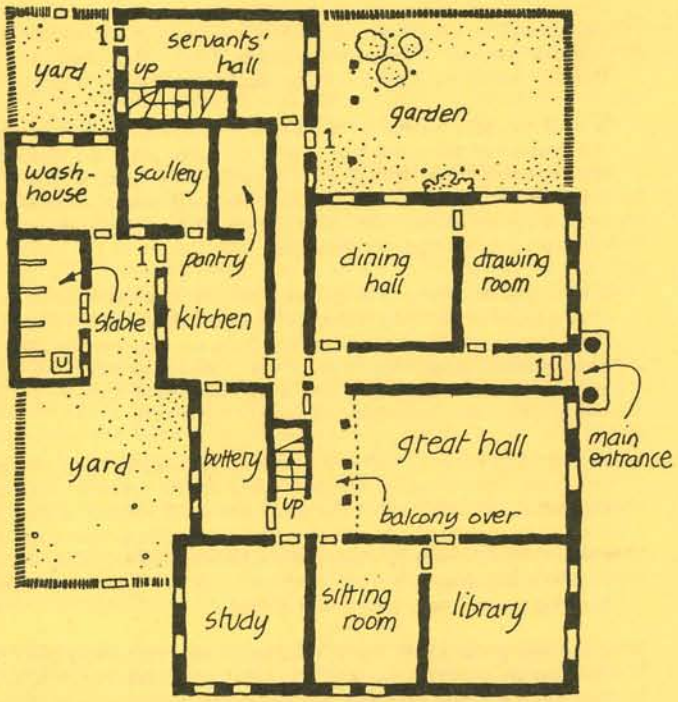
FIRST FLOOR

THE RIVER

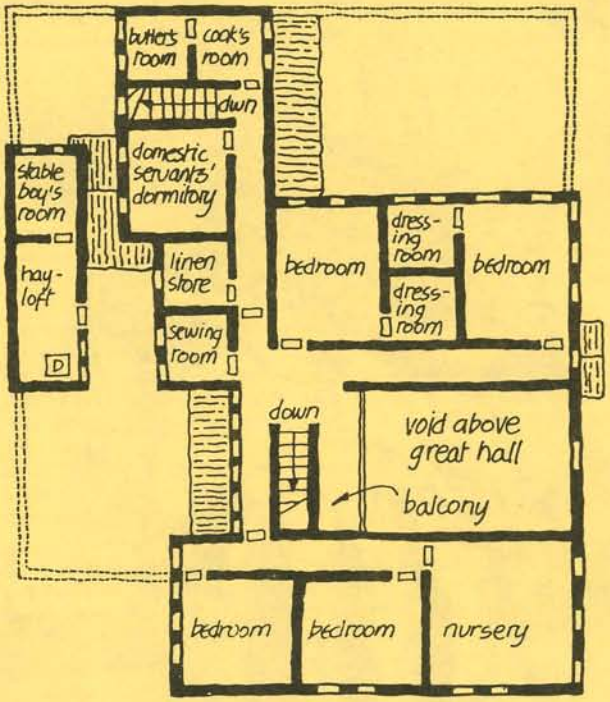


GROUND FLOOR

THE TOWN HOUSE

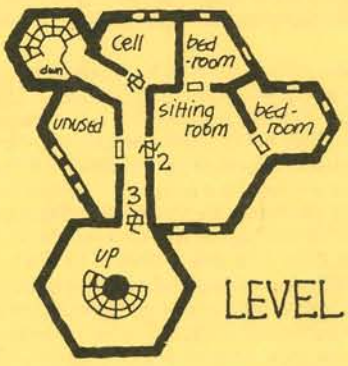


GROUND FLOOR

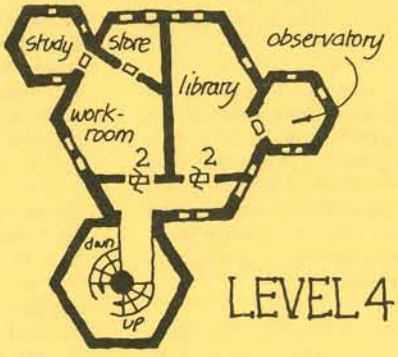


FIRST FLOOR

THE TOWER of BAK'LEIS

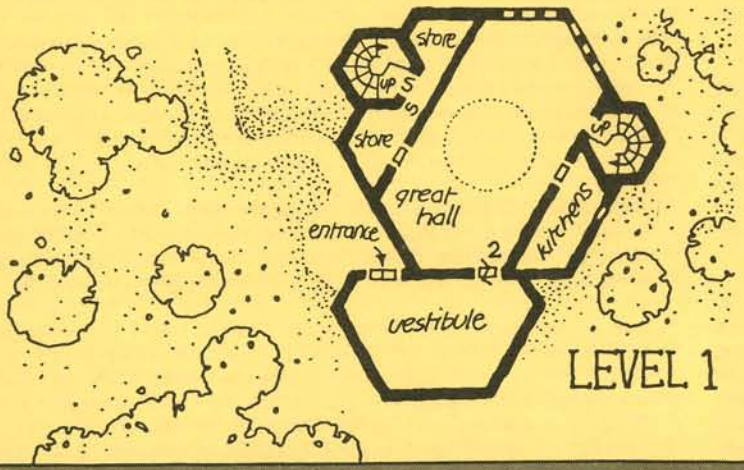


LEVEL 3

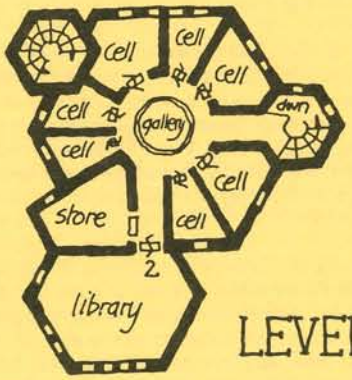


LEVEL 4

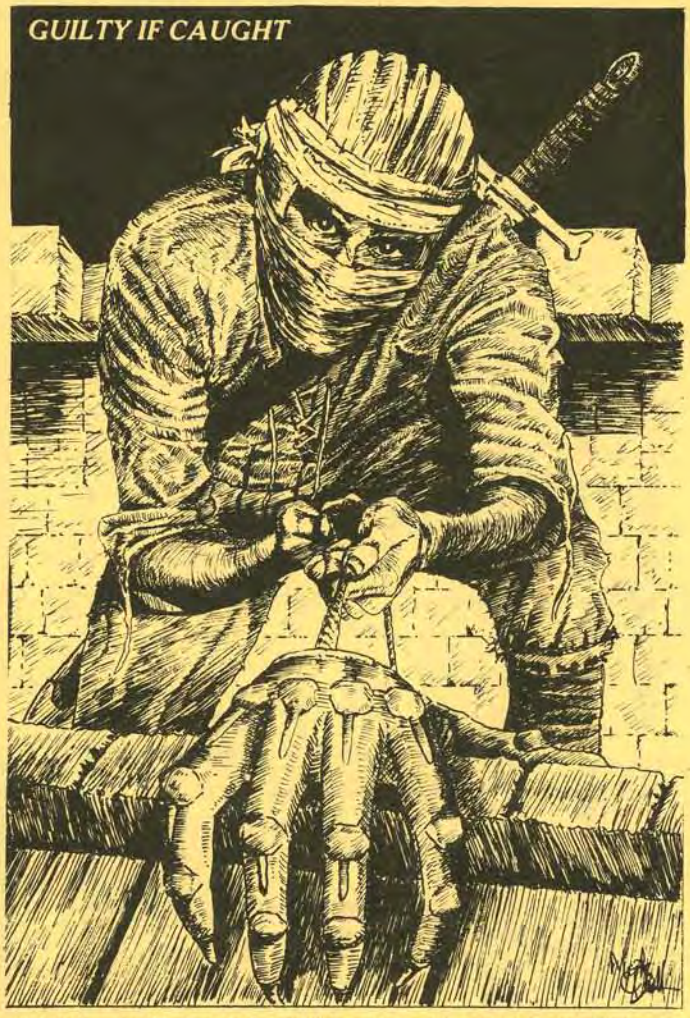
LEVEL 5



LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2



around a small courtyard, could be any small manor house. The rooms here are outfitted in a rich, but subdued, manner. There are almost no valuable items on display: the wealth of Ven Jharbulus is expressed in the quality of the furnishings, wall panelling, tapestries and the like; all of magnificent workmanship. His valuables are kept in two strong boxes in the offices on the first and second floors of the warehouse. There is, however, no indication of the real source of Ven Jharbulus' fortune — he is a fence for the Guild of River Thieves, a completely autonomous Thieves' Guild. Cleren Gyris, the Guildmaster and the player character(s) should be unaware of Jharbulus' dual role.

The house is well protected against thieves — as might be expected of one so intimately connected with them. The ground floor windows are barred and locked (-10% Open Locks), with gaps of less than 4 inches between each bar. External and internal doors marked (**1**) have strong, complex locks (-25% Open Locks), while those marked with a (**2**) are even better protected (-30% Open Locks). The ordinary doors in the house are only shut and locked 50% of the time, and have compartively simple mechanisms (-5% Open Locks). First and second floor windows are not barred, but do have locks (-10% Open Locks).

The gates have fairly simple, but very heavy, padlocks (-10% Open Locks). The only exception to this is the watergate, which can only be raised and lowered from above the pool clerk's chamber — as the mechanism is never greased and makes a terrible noise when in use this is not regarded as much of a risk.

The secret doors do not have locks, their secrecy being judged sufficient security. The secret door that opens onto the roof is the method by which the River Thieves enter the house, after climbing across from the adjacent buildings. The door between the store and the rest of the second floor is always kept locked. Ven Jharbulus stores some stolen property in this room, but usually moves as many goods as possible down to the secret upper store (**a**) — a room which he believes the River Thieves do not know about.

A section of the town's old sewers runs beneath the house. These 4' diameter pipes are in a poor state of repair and the DM should assume they have collapsed at points just beyond the edge of the map, making them impassable. However, this section of the system can be entered just above river water level, say from a small boat. The stone flags which form manhole covers down into the system may be lifted from beneath by a Strength ability check — but unless a Move Silently roll is also made the noise will attract a member of the household.

Entering during the day is unwise, even for invisible characters. The warehouse is busy from dawn to dusk, and the office is never left empty until it is locked at the end of the day's business. At the front of the house the domestic staff spend most of the day cleaning and tidying. If an attempt is made to enter the house during the day, the character(s) involved must Move Silently (+5%) every round to blend into the background and avoid notice. Failure will result in a swift beating (1-10 points of damage, Charisma reduced by 1-3 points until wounds healed) from the warehouse guards if the character is caught, but little else.

It is, of course, possible for disguised characters to enter the house on the pretext of being traders, which will give them an opportunity to discover the basic layout of the commercial part of the building. Naturally, this does not include the presence of the upper store (**a**) or any of the secret doors. An Intelligence ability check is required to successfully manage this deception.

Entering at night is a safer proposition, and the character(s) will have little trouble in climbing to the roof of one of the adjacent buildings and from there onto the house proper. Once on the roof the character(s) should make Move Silently and Hide in Shadows rolls every round to avoid detection, although only a simultaneous failure of both will indicate that they have been spotted.

At night only the front half of the house and the guardroom are normally occupied. The domestic servants sleep in the servants' hall and the kitchen (Birtle only), while the dockhands and waggon drivers occupy the non-domestic servants' hall next to the stables. Most nights (4[illegible] chance) Ven Jharbulus sleeps in the back bedroom, while his current mistress occupies the large bedroom. The offices and stores of the building are normally empty and locked.

6 serving girls: AC 9; HD 1; hp 2 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as NM; ML 5; AL N ; XP 10 each; WR 10; THACO 20; the girls will avoid any intruders and attempt to raise the alarm. If cornered, they will fight with whatever kitchen knives (D1-4) and the like that come to hand.
Birtle, the cook: AC 7 or 6; Fighter 5; hp 45; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F5; ML 12; AL N ; XP 175; WR 14; THACO 16; S 16 (+2), I 14, W 13, C 18 (+3), D 16 (+2), Ch 10; Jharbulus' ex-enforcer, who was given her current position after losing a leg in a sailing accident. Birtle is still a capable fighter, and keeps her **longsword +2** and **shield +1** in the kitchen and well oiled. Birtle will arm herself before investigating any noise, and is surprised only on a roll of 1 (with a d8).
6 dockhands/waggon drivers: AC 7; Fighter 2; hp 10 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D 1-6 (shortswords); Save as F2; ML 7; AL N; XP 20 each; WR 8; THACO 19; these men have learned that it is better to know little of what is going on, but they will fight if their sleeping quarters are disturbed.
3 warehouse guards: AC 5; Fighter 3; hp 13 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as F3; ML 9; AL C; XP 35; WR 7; THACO 19; armed with shortswords (D1-6) and blackjacks (D1-2, see **Players Companion, p5** for extra effects). They are responsible for the security of the sto[illegible] and the quay and will investigate any strange noises. There is also a [illegible] 12 chance per turn that one of the guards will decide to wander around the pool, checking the locks on the stores and the office as he does so.
Mistress Ash: AC 5; Thief 5; hp 18; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as T5; ML 8; AL C; XP 175; WR 9; THACO 17; S 12, I 13, W 13, C 14 (+1), D 17 (+2), Ch 18; **ring of protection +2, ring of human control, dagger +2**; Ash has been placed in the Jharbulus household by the Guild of River Thieves to keep an eye on him. If encountered, she will pretend to be no more than a rather vacant (but very attractive) young woman, and will not reveal her talents as a thief unless she has to.

Few people in the house stir after midnight, save for Jharbulus when there are nocturnal visits from the River Thieves' Guild. On any particular night there is a 15% chance that a group of River Thieves will be in the house, dealing with Jharbulus. They will have entered across the roof with their ill-gotten gains and the second floor office and the stores next to it will be in use by Jharbulus and his partners in crime.

Otherwise, Jharbulus will be asleep in his room. He is a very nervous sleeper, thanks to his association with cut-throats. Any noise in either office will wake him, and he will take 1 round to select a weapon before investigating. Given the chance he will alert the entire household.

Ven Jharbulus: AC 8; Elf 4; hp 16; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as E4; ML 4; AL N; XP 125; WR 12; THACO 16; S 14 (+1), I 15, W 14, C 12, D 14 (+1), Ch 16; spells — **charm person, shield, ESP, web**; armed with **longsword +2, dagger +1 (+2 vs Thieves)**. Ven Jharbulus is something of a coward, and especially afraid of assassination by his 'colleagues'. He will use his spells in preference to involving himself in physical combat.

2-4 River Thieves: AC 5; Thief 4; hp 14 each: MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as T4; ML 9; AL C; XP 75 each; WR 9; THACO 19; S Ave; D 16 (+2); armed with shortswords (D1-6) and **daggers +1**. One of the thieves has a pair of tiger's claws in his pouch, and another has a **helping hand** (see Appendix).

Cleren Gyris' promissory note is held in the strongbox in the first floor office. This strongbox has a simple lock (+5% Open Locks), and along with Cleren's paper are documents relating to Jharbulus' normal business — warehouse lists, ships' manifests, letters and the like. On top of the papers is a bag containing the wages for the next month, some 400gp in mixed coins.

All the papers relating to his other business are in the office above, in a much more formidable iron box (-20% Open Locks) which is also trapped (-5% Find Traps, -10% Remove Traps) to release a cloud of poisonous fungal spores into the air — save vs poison or suffer the equivalent of a **cause disease** spell, success indicates that the victim is blinded until **cure blindness** is cast upon him or her. These papers are a full record of all Jharbulus' criminal activities — names, dates, times, items and their sources, cash paid and received. The box also contains the valuables that Ven Jharbulus has received and not yet sold or broken up for their material value. These are four gold candlesticks (worth 250gp each), a silver inlaid goblet (100gp), a necklace of garnets (300gp), sixteen gold and silver forks (25gp each), an enamel clasp (150gp), a silver inlaid handmirror (worth 50gp) and a case of collapsible silver field cups (worth 200gp). All these are traceable since they contain family crests or personal symbols worked into the designs.

Larger stolen items — furniture, paintings, weaponry, armour and the like — are stored in upper store (**a**). Ven Jharbulus does not know of its true powers, but one of the swords that he currently holds is an intelligent neutral **longsword +3** (Int 17, Ego 10, **detect magic, detect good/evil, flying**, speaks griffon, faerie and local Thieves' Cant) which has remained silent for fear of its fate.

Extending the Adventure

What is the attitude of the River Thieves to members of a rival Guild entering a major centre of their operations? Do they take steps to recover their spoils or revenge Jharbulus' loss? What is the attitude of the Guildmaster to this rival Guild? Does he send the player characters out to start a gangland war?

3. Professional Rivalry

This section is designed for a mid-level thief character — certainly no higher than 9th level. As well as being the type of spying mission that a Thieves' Guild would undertake, this job is also suitable as the object of a **geas** bespelled Thief. The DM will find a copy of the Companion Set is a considerable aid in running this section.

Introduction

The Tower of Bak'leis has been a centre of magic since before anyone can remember. Bak'leis is a wizard of considerable power, a fact that allows him to distance himself from fellow magicians. Bak'leis ignores them, teaching his sorcery only to those he considers worthy enough. Other mages, for their part, dismiss him as a charlatan, one barely entitled to use the word 'wizardry' — and certainly not proficient enough to be considered for membership of the Brotherhood of Prestidigitators.

The exception to this is S'JMee the Hungry, First of the Brotherhood. She knows Bak'leis may one day be powerful enough to challenge her, so he must be monitored (spying is beneath the dignity of a true Mage), and, if necessary, stopped before he goes too far. The first requirement is to watch Bak'leis, and for that the services of a Thief are required.

Whether the player character becomes involved through the Guild accepting a contract or as a result of a **geas**, the task is quite simple (in principle). The Tower of Bak'leis must be entered and a number of **watcher's eyes** (see **Appendix**) positioned at strategic points so that the wizard can be properly monitored. Ideally, one Eye should be positioned in each of the following, although any three eyes in place will suffice: the Libraries (2nd and 4th levels), Bak'leis' workroom (4th level), Bak'leis' study (4th level) and the Conjuration Chamber (5th level).

If the Thief has been assigned this task by the Guild, his or her fee should be that the Brotherhood will cast any one spell of below 6th level on request. If this task is as the result of a geas, the Thief should be made to realise that he or she is lucky to have escaped so lightly — although the DM can increase the reward to a small magic item or a treasure map.

The Tower

The Tower should be located in a ruined section of a town or city, or in a marshy area beyond a town. The area chosen should be one with an uneasy reputation.

The Tower itself is a mysterious structure, constructed of a dark red stone, which has been vitrified, smoothed and polished to a glass-like sheen. Always cold to the touch, and greasy with moisture, the stone presents a very slippery surface, which would test even the finest climber (-40% Climb Walls). The windows of the Tower are, for the most part, narrow, simple openings in the wall, and have neither glass or bars. The libraries, great hall and the third level have stained glass to provide some measure of protection against the elements, but none have locks or other means of protection.

The doors of the Tower are constructed of thinner panels of the same stone of the building. These doors are thick enough to muffle all sounds, but they can just be seen through if the light source is on the other side of the door — moving patches of faint shadow and reddish light. The doors do not possess locks, and swing easily on their hinges, unless they are magically protected. Doors marked with a lightning flash have a **wizard lock** cast upon them. Doors marked with a lightning flash and a (2) have a **mage lock** (see **Appendix**) cast upon them. This spell will allow only a person wearing a deep red robe to pass through. Bak'leis and all his students (see below) have such robes, inscribed with Bak'leis' monogram. Thief skills are useless against such magical protections.

The furnishings of the building are spartan — wooden benches, trestle tables, straw-stuffed mattresses in the students' cells, hard wooden stools. There are no decorations of any kind. The only rooms on which care and attention have been lavished are the libraries, the workroom, the study, and the conjuration chamber. While not comfortable, these rooms are packed with tomes, books, grimoires, magical impedimentia, worktables and spell materials, including parts of one or two bodies, carefully preserved in large glass jars. The vestibule is another exception. It is piled high with mouldering goods — gifts from ordinary folk attempting to placate or bribe Bak'leis and his followers.

To enter, the Thief must climb up the outside and in through one of the windows (attempting to get in through the vestibule is pointless — the inner door is **mage locked**). Once inside, the only way to move about freely is to obtain a robe — many doorways cannot be passed by any other method. Of course, the Thief can always take the riskier path of climbing round the outside of the Tower.

Bak'leis and his students take little notice of the world outside. Between midday and dusk the work of the tower is unceasing — Bak'leis labours in his study and workroom, while lower magicians carry out mundane tasks in the kitchen, storerooms and halls — cooking, sorting, cleaning and endlessly polishing. At night, until midnight, everyone sleeps, and then for three or four hours Bak'leis teaches, casts spells and imparts knowledge in the conjuration chamber. Before dawn, usually exhausted by their magical labours, all return to their cells and sleep. At midday the strange routine starts once more.

Because of this routine, the DM should roll for encounters every round that the Thief is within the Tower during a period of wakefulness, a 1 (on 1d6) indicating that an encounter has taken place. During a sleep period only a failed Move Silently roll will cause one of the following to wake, and only then if the the character is in one of the cells or the kitchen (where the pupils sleep).

Die Roll (1d12)	Encounter
1-3	Student (see below)
4-10	Apprentice (see below)
11-12	Pupil (see below)

Bak'leis: AC 2; Magic User 14; hp 30; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as MU14; ML 8; AL N; XP 2300; WR 11; THACO 11; S 12, I 18, W 16, C 12, D 16 (+2), Ch 10; **dagger +2, ring of protection +3, displacer cloak, wand of illusion** (5 charges), **ring of spell storing (animate dead, speak with the dead, raise dead** — all clerical spells); Spells normally memorised — **charm person, shield, sleep, protection from evil, continual darkness, detect invisible, levitate, phantasmal force, dispel magic** (x3), **lightning bolt, charm monster, polymorph others, polymorph self, wizard eye, cloudkill, conjure elemental, hold monster, anti-magic shell, geas**. His spell books contain all spells of 5th level and below, including **mage lock** (see **Appendix**), and all 6th level spells except **disintegrate, lower water** and **projected image**.

Bak'leis will never be encountered as a 'wanderer', only within his chambers on the third level and in the conjuration chamber, where he keeps a little money, some 125gp in mixed coinage.

3 Students: AC 9; Magic User 7; hp 16 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as MU7; ML 8; AL N; XP 500; WR 12; THACO 15; armed with daggers; spells memorised — **read magic** (x2) **shield, detect evil, detect invisible, dispel magic, hold person, polymorph others**.
7 Apprentices: AC 9; Magic User 3; hp 8; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as MU3; ML 7; AL N; XP 25; WR 10; THACO 17; armed with daggers; spells memorised — **read magic** (x2), **detect invisible** or **web**.
2 Pupils: AC 9; HD 1; hp 2; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon; Save as NM; ML 10; AL N; XP 10; WR 10; THACO 20; armed with kitchen knives (daggers). These children have yet to start learning true wizardry — they are the Tower servants — but they do attend all midnight sessions.

Appendix

NEW EQUIPMENT NEW EQUIPMENT NEW EQUIPMENT NEW EQUIPMENT

Tiger's Claws

These specially modified gauntlets are designed as an aid to climbing sheer surfaces. The palm of each glove has several short steel barbs, while longer steel claws extend between the fingers. When wearing a pair of these gloves a Thief gains +10% to his chance of Climbing Walls, but suffers a -5% penalty if trying to Move Silently at the same time. While wearing tiger's claws a Thief cannot manipulate any other objects, but the claws can be used as a melee weapon which causes 1d4 points of damage. Tiger's claws cost 45gp.

NEW SPELL NEW SPELL NEW SPELL NEW SPELL NEW SPELL NEW SPELL

Mage Lock

Third Level Magic User Spell
Range: 10'
Duration: Permanent
Effect: One portal or lock

This spell is a more powerful and flexible version of **wizard lock** (2nd level MU spell). The effects of the spell last forever unless dispelled. A lock or portal held by a mage lock will only be opened by a **knock** spell 25% of the time, although it can be opened by a magic-using creature of 3 or more Levels (or Hit Dice) greater than the caster. In this case it will relock when allowed to close.

The conditions under which a mage locked door will open can be varied to include other situations than the caster of the spell opening the door. For example, it can be cast in such a manner that a particular key — which must be positioned in the lock at the time of casting — is required to open the lock, but it need not be turned by the caster. Even an apparently identical copy will not work. Alternatively, the spell can be cast to include much more general parameters, so that a door will only open to someone (not necessarily the caster) who is wearing a particular colour of robe, type of amulet, or is of a particular race or sex.

The parameters must not be complex, and cannot include two conditions — 'open for female green robe wearers' is not allowed, but 'open for females' or 'open for green robe wearers' are permissible.

NEW MAGICAL ITEMS NEW MAGICAL ITEMS NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

The Helping Hand

The **helping hand** appears to be an iron glove with unusally long fingers, and an iron ring (to tie it to a rope) at the wrist. When given the command word, it will grab whatever next comes into contact with its palm and hold on until told to release its grip. If attached to a rope, it can be used as a grappling iron that will, 85% of the time, land silently.

If thrown at an opponent (and a successful 'to hit' roll is made) it will grab its victim's throat, automatically causing 1 point of damage in the first round, 2 points of damage in the second round, 4 points in the third round and so on. A **helping hand** which is strangling somebody can only be removed by a successful Strength ability check (a roll under a characters strength on 1d20) at a penalty of

Watcher's Eyes

These spying devices are always found as the eyes of a statuette. When one of the eyeballs is removed from its socket what it sees may be seen by anyone who gazes into the other eye (cf **clairvoyance** spell). The statues are often finely wrought representations of hydras, thus allowing several locations to be viewed via the one statue and its associated eyes. **Watcher's eyes** will not function at a range of more than 1 league, and only visual images are transmitted, never sounds.

Credits

Criminal Mastermind: *Mike Brunton*
Aided and abetted by —
Mugshots: *Mark O'Dell*
The Scenes of the Crimes: *Paul Ruiz*

Games

FOR WAR, FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING

50-54 Manchester St.,
Liverpool L1 6ER.
Tel: 051 236 2605

Unit 20, Merrion Centre,
Leeds 2.
Tel: 0532 456376

25-27 Grange Road West,
Birkenhead,
Tel: (051) 647 4676

MAIL ORDER
85-87 Victoria St.,
Liverpool L1 6DG.
Tel: 051 227 1505

TRADE
89 Victoria St.,
Liverpool L1 6DG
Tel: 051 236 2605

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES by FGU

CHIVALRY & SORCERY Second Edition
Chivalry & Sorcery: 3 volume boxed set £17.75
The Dragonlords: C&S scenario book £4.45
C&S Sourcebook: revised edition £6.95
C&S Sourcebook 2: supplementary material £5.75
Swords & Sorcerers: revised edition £5.45
AFTERMATH– post holocaust rpg. boxed £20.75
Into the Ruins: Aftermath scenario book £5.45
Operation Morpheus: Aftermath scenario book £6.95
Sydney: The Wilderness Campaign ditto £5.95
DAREDEVILS – rpg set in the 1930's £13.45
Daredevils Adventures 1, 2 & 3 ..... each £4.45
BUSHIDO Detailed rpg set in the Land of Nippon £7.95
Valley of the Mists (Bushido) £4.45
OTHER SUNS excellent SF rpg £13.95
LANDS OF ADVENTURE rpg with cutture packs £10.75
PRIVATEERS & GENTLEMEN naval 1755-1820 ..... £14.95
King Over the Water: P&G scenario pack £5.45
Decision at Djerba: P&G scenario pack £4.45
BUNNIES & BURROWS – rabbit role playing £5.45

VILLAINS & VIGILANTES 2nd Edition – Boxed set £10.75
2nd Edition rulebook only £5.45
Crisis at Crusader Citadel – intro adventure £4.45
Death Duel with the Destroyers – V & V Adventure £4.45
Island of Dr. Apocalypse – V & V adventure £4.45
Force – V & V adventure £4.45
Opponents Unlimited V & V NPC's and organisations £4.45
From The Deeps of Space – V&V adventure £4.45
Counter Set 1 – character and vehicle counters for V&V £3.95
MERC modern mercenary rpg, skirmish wargame £10.75
Merc supplement, more rules & skills £4.45
SPACE OPERA complete, compelling SF £17.75
– Star Atlas's 1, 2, 3, 11 & 12 ..... £5.95
– Vault of the Niêr Queyon £4.45
– Casino Galactica £4.45
– Agents of Rebellion £4.95
– Operation Peregrine £5.45
– Rowsion 2, Incedus 3 ..... each £4.45
– Probe NCG 8436 ..... £4.45
PSI WORLD: rpg of psychics £10.75

BUSHIDO
THE GOOD NEWS

BOXED SET NOW ONLY
£7.95
Yes, it's a fantastic price reduction but don't just sit round marvelling at it. Get out and buy a copy!

NEW SCENARIO – **TAKISHIDO'S DEBT**
A UK written and produced mini-adventure, stuffed full of the Bushido charm and atmosphere – and only
95p
now that's what I call a **sensible** scenario **price**

SUPERB GAMES SYSTEM – SENSIBLE PRICES

GRENADIER MODELS

MASTERPIECE EDITIONS Two beautiful skeleton models. A **War Mammoth** complete with crew and howdah and a **Death Dragon** with rider. Sculpting and detail are superb. £8.50 each, boxed.
CHAMPIONS Bring alive your Super Hero gaming with these two boxes of miniature marvels. There is a box of **Villains** and one of **Heroes.** Also suitable for SF games. £8.50.
DRAGONLORDS Vampires, mummies, ghouls, werewolves and other traditional creepies lurk within the box of **Folklore Creatures of the Night.** Not only suitable for fantasy games but also Cthulhu, Daredevils and Superhero games. £5.95.
CALL OF CTHULHU The official range of 25mm figures for this popular game. Set 1: Adventurers. Set 2: Creatures £7.95 per set (boxed).
FANTASY LORDS Here's a set to weed out the weeds in any party. **Demons** has a selection of 10 such terrors from Hell. Boxed £8.50.
TRAVELLER There are some odd looking sentients in **Alien Mercenaries** but let us entertain no racial prejudice. Just because a chap's got legs all over the place and a head like a starfish, that's no reason to mock him. Box of extra terrestials £8.50.
ADVENTURE MODULES – A new enterprise from Grenadier. Top class adventures for popular games. The **Horrible Secret of Monhegan Island** is a Cthulhu scenario packed with atmosphere and menace. **Cloudland** is suitable for fantasy systems like AD&D, whilst **Raid on Rajallapor** is a hairy chested, modern mercenary caper. Finally, there is **Disappearence on Aramat,** a compelling Traveller adventure. All at £5.50 each.

NEW FROM FGU

Empire Karo: An Aftermath scenario set some years after a disasterous World War. The city of Cairo in Illinois (known as Karo to its inhabitants) provides the focus of this absorbing adventure **£4.45**
Battle Above The Earth is another larger-than-just-about-anything V&V adventure **£4.45**
Songsmith A new C&S scenario **£4.45**

DRAGONLORDS

Two new additions to the dragons in this range:
Green Silver £5.95 each
Also available: Black White Red Brass
also **£5.95** each.

NICE DICE PRICE!

Standard polyset 6 dice £1.75
Or with inked numerals £1.95
Deluxe polyset with inked numerals 95p
Fireball polyset £1.50
Or with inked numerals £1.75
Transparent Gem polyset £2.95
Or with inked numerals £3.25
30 sided dice 90p
30 sided dice inked £1.00
Nickel/Copper Plated D30 ..... £1.45
Nickel/Copper Plated other sizes 70p
Average Dice (pair) 35p

ARMORY ACRYLIC PAINTS

A fine selection of over 60 different colours including such esoteria as POMEGRANATE, BUBONIC BLUE: PALOMINO & NIPPLE PINK! More normal colours also available.
£1.25 per .75 oz jar.
Send SAE for full lists.

BARCLAYCARD
VISA
AMERICAN EXPRESS

WHY NOT ORDER BY TELEPHONE USING ACCESS, BARCLAYCARD, OR AMERICAN EXPRESS
save the trouble of sending a letter and cheque.
WE PREFER THIS METHOD. We can try to answer any queries and you will also be sure you are getting exactly what you want and sooner normally by return of post.
P&P: UK & BFPO: Order value over £6.00 – free
Up to £6.00 add 50p.
OVERSEAS: Charged at cost. Please allow for this in your order. If in doubt write or phone.
Usually 75p per boxed game
OVERSEAS TRADE ORDERS WELCOME

STANDARD GAMES & PUBLICATIONS

DRAGONROAR
The new rpg from Standard Games. A boxed system complete with those accessories that you usually have to pay extra for. All this plus Killer Penguins **AND** Giant Hedgehogs.
Dragonroar £12.95
Samurai Blades – Japanese skirmish game £9.95
Cry Havoc – medieval skirmish game £9.95
Cry Havoc scenarios £2.95
Siege – compatible with Cry Havoc £9.95
City of Sorceerrs – fantasy boardgame £9.95
Starship Captain – SF boardgame £12.95
The Village – extra map for Cry Havoc £2.45
The Crossroads – as above £2.45
The Forest – new map for Cry Havoc £2.45
Dungeon Accessories: box 1 ..... £2.95
Dungeon Accessories: box 2 ..... £2.95
Felt hex – cloth playing surface: blue, sand, black or green. All with printed hex grid £12.95
Clear plastic Hex Sheet – overlay 15mm £1.80
" " " " 25mm £1.80
Thunde-rin Guns – Old West excitement £6.99
Speed & Steel – Blitzkreig boardgame £9.00

LOST WORLDS – game books

The ingenious, illustrated one-on-one combat game. Pick any two titles and let battle commence.
* SKELETON * DWARF * GOBLIN * HUMAN * HILL TROLL * WOMAN * BARBARIAN * ... **each £1.99**

ARMADA ORIGINALS

In stock, the first two titles in the GRAILQUEST series of Solo Fantasy Gamebooks. Excellent adventures that can be played again and again.
Castle of Darkness £1.50
The Den of Dragons £1.50
Gateway of Doom £1.50

DEMONSPAWN
1. Fire * Wolf £1.50
2. The Crypts of Terror £1.50
LONEWOLF
1. Flight from the Dark £1.50
2. Fire on the Water £1.50
3. The Caverns of Kaltie £1.50

JAMES BOND ROLE PLAYING SYSTEM

Complete Basic Game £12.95
Basic Rulebook £8.95
'Q' Manual £8.95
Gamesmasters Pack £8.95
Gamesmasters Pack 2 ..... £8.95
– Octopussy £5.95
– Goldfinger £5.95
– Dr. No £6.95
– Live and Let Die £7.95
– You Only Live Twice £6.95

TSR UK Ltd.

D & D Basic Set: rules, dice £9.50
D & D Expert Set: rules, dice, adv £9.50
D & D COMPANION SET – Extend the range of your D & D games. Companion Set permits the use of high level characters, mass armies, alternative planes of existence and lots more to challenge players and DM's alike £9.50
D & D Character Records sheets £2.95
A D & D Dungeon Masters Guide £10.95
A D & D Players Handbook £9.95
A D & D Monster Manual £9.95
A D & D Monster Manual 2 ..... £9.95
A D & D Deities + Demigods £9.95
A D & D Fiend Folio £9.95
A D & D Dungeon Masters Screen £4.95
A D & D Character Record sheets £3.95
A D & D Player Character Folder £3.95
A D & D NPC Character Record sheets £3.95
A D & D DM's Adventure Log £3.95
Rogues Gallery NPC stats £3.95
World of Greyhawk – revised boxed edition £9.50
AC1 – Shady Dragon Inn (D&D) £3.95
AC2 (D & D Combat Shield) £4.50
AC3 Dragon Tiles £3.95

MODULES – BASIC D & D
B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6 ..... each £4.50
M1: (solo module) ..... each £4.50
MODULES – EXPERT D & D
X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, O1, M2, XL1, XSOLO, X6 ..... each £4.50
MODULES – COMPANION D & D
CM1 ..... £4.50
MODULES – A D & D
S2 ..... £3.50
A1, A2, A3, A4, C1, C2, D1-2, D3 ..... each £4.50
EX1, EX2, G1-3, 11, 12, 13, 14, CB1 ..... each £4.50
L1, L2, N1, Q1, S1, T1, UK1, UK2, UK3, UK4 ..... each £4.50
U1, U2, U3, WG4, DL1, MV1, WG5, UK5, UK6, DL2 ..... each £4.50
S3, S4 ..... each £5.50
I5, I6 ..... each £4.95
Dragon Magazine £2.50
Gamma World: NEW edition £9.50
G W Modules: GW1, GW2, GW3, GW4 ..... each £3.95
G W Mini Module & Referee's Screen £3.95
Boot Hill £9.50
B H Modules: BH1, BH2, BH3, BH4, BH5 ..... each £3.95
B H Mini Module & Referees Screen £3.95
Top Secret (including Module 1) £9.50
T S Modules: TS2, TS3, TS4, TS5 ..... each £3.95
TS Mini Module & Referee's Screen £3.95
Agent Dossiers (TS Character Sheets) £3.95
Gangbusters £9.50
G B Modules: GB1, GB2, GB3, GB4, GB5 ..... each £3.95
Starfrontiers (inc. Module 0) £9.50
Knight Hawks: for Starfrontiers £9.50
SF Modules:
SF1, SF2, SF3, SFKH1, SFKH2, SF4 ..... each £4.50
S F Mini Module & Referees Screen £3.95
Starfrontiers Character Record Sheets £3.95
Indiana Jones rpg £9.50
Indiana Jones Modules: IJ1, IJ2 ..... each £4.50
Fantasy Forest £4.95
Endless Quest Books ..... each £1.25
Quest For The Dungeonmaster £5.95
Imagine Magazine (including back issues) £1.00
Best of Imagine (scenarios) £1.95
Marvel Super Heroes rpg £10.50
Marvel game modules:
MH1; MH2: MHAC1; MHAC2 ..... each £2.95

ENDLESS GAMES Floor plans for 15 or 25mm figures
Dungeon Plans – Labyrinthine **£3.99**
Dungeon Plans – Spacious **£3.99**
Cave Plans – Tortuous **£3.99**
Cave Plans – Cavernous **£3.95**

TUNNELS & TROLLS
FANTASY GAMES SYSTEM

Rulebook (5th edition) **£5.95**
Captif d'Yvoire adventure **£1.95**
Don't forget, we still have the full range of T&T Solo Dungeons & Adventures; Referee's Adventures; Accessories, etc. Lists available.

AVALON HILL fantasy/sf/rpg

Dragonhunt £14.95
Dragon Pass £14.95
Dune £14.95
Elric £14.95
Freedom in the Galaxy £18.45
Lords of Creation £11.45
Horn of Roland (LOC) £7.95
Yeti Sanction (LOC) £9.95
Omegakron (LOC) £9.95
Machiavelli £13.45
Magic Realm £14.95
Powers & Perils £21.95
Tower of Dead (P&P) £8.45
Runequest 3 – De Luxe edition £39.95
– Players Pack £19.95
– Gamemasters Pack £24.95
Starship Troopers £14.95
Titan £14.95
Wizards £18.45
Wizard's Quest £14.95

THE HALLS OF THE DWARVEN KINGS

A beautiful, boxed, role-playing accessory which combines a top class **Tortured Souls** original scenario with the sophisticated floor plans of **Endless Plans.** Also included are a DM's screen, scrolls, maps and NPC stats. Original, innovative and great value **£7.95**

★★★★★★★★★★★★

MAIL ORDER SERVICE

HERE'S WHAT WE OFFER:

* A **VERY** FAST TURN ROUND
* POST PAID ON ORDERS OVER £6.00
* INFORMATIVE **FREE** NEWSLETTER
* SPECIAL OFFERS
* TELEPHONE ORDERS BY CREDIT CARD

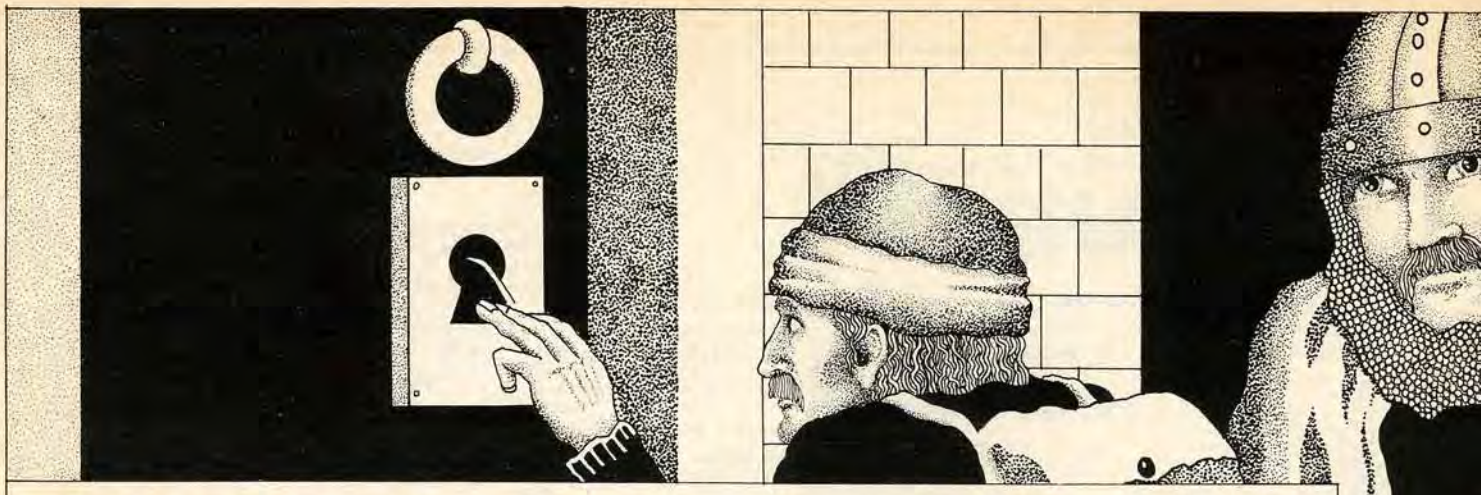
Details of how to order are given elsewhere on this page. Why not give us a try – you probably deserve a pleasant surprise.

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "GAMES".

★★★★★★★★★★★★

TRADE ENQUIRIES
ALL ITEMS ON THIS PAGE ARE AVAILABLE TO THE TRADE
SEND FOR FULL DETAILS

TITAN BOOKS
Judge Dredd 1 * Judge Dredd 2 * Block Mania
Cursed Earth 1 * Cursed Earth 2
Judge Caligula 1 * Judge Caligula 2
Judge Child 1 * Judge Child 2 * Judge Child 3
Judge Death * Ro-busters 1
ABC Warriors 1 * ABC Warriors 2
Robo-Hunters 1 * Robo-Hunters 2
all the above £3.50 each
Nemesis * Ro-busters 2 * Nemesis the Warlock
Judge Dredd 3: these 4 £3.95 each



AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE

by Chris Barlow

The scene: a bleak and wintry night before the door of a forboding mansion. Three adventurers twitch and look nervously about as a fourth, a small figure, huddles over the door's mighty lock. One of the three, a burly character, speaks:

'What's taking you so long, Garim? I thought you said you would be able to open it.'

'Hush.... I can't hear myself think....'

'You are a master thief, aren't you?' the burly man enquires, menacingly.

The smaller figure looks back over his shoulder. 'Yes,' he hisses, 'but so is Redneck, the man we are trying to rob.'

Ever since he first embarked upon his career as a thief, Garim Kalis has devoted a good proportion of his time trying to open locks — without the proper key. His skill has improved through practice and experience; he has encountered different locks in the field, purchased different varieties to take apart on his workbench, trained at the Guildhouse under the most skilled teachers. Garim thought he was ready for this one. He had bought an identical lock from the same shop where Redneck purchased his. It seemed so easy to open at home.

In the AD&D® game , such tensions do not occur. A thief has the same chance of opening a lock no matter how complex — or how simple — it is to open. So, to rectify this, consider a new skill for thieves; lockmaking.

WHY THIEVES?

As well as practice, perseverence and patience, if Garim is to be successful at picking locks, he needs an expert's knowledge of how to make them. Only hours of testing their weak and strong points will enable him to be make more efficient picking tools, and to improve his chances of opening a lock in the difficult environments he will meet them in. All this effort will make him an expert on how locks are actually made.

Similarly, locksmiths will find that they need to know a greater deal about thiefly skills in order to build unpickable locks. They too will be burning candles well into the night, picking their own locks! The two professions are very closely linked. To an extent, it might be most convenient to think of locksmiths as 'Lawful' thieves, building the locks that their 'Chaotic' cousins seek to pick for personal gain. If this convention is adopted, then the contest between the two can be made a personal and bitter struggle.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

As a basic principle, the better the thief-locksmith, the higher the level of lock the thief-locksmith can make. Following the logic of this, we can then say that the higher the level of lock, the more difficult it is going to be for a more standard thief to open.

It is very simple to incorporate this idea into into a campaign. Consider the following table:

Level of lock:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Added difficulty:	0%	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%

The added degree of difficulty is the measure of how much harder the lock is to open than a basic, Level 1, lock. This percentage can be subtracted from a thief's normal percentage chance to open the lock. A thief-locksmith can design and build locks to a level up to and equalling his own, and all locks built by less competent craftsmen will be Level 0, and all thieves will be on a +5% bonus against them. The kinds of crude locking devices invented by humanoid races would fall into this latter category, whilst most locks on chests, doors in cities, and so forth would be Level 1.

This simple system could be adopted on its own. All DMs need to do with scenarios of their own design, or purchased modules, is to assign levels to all the locks that might be encountered. This should be done logically, bearing in mind the circumstances of the story and the campaign, and in all but the most unusual, locks will be of Level 0 or 1. But for that little bit of extra protection for the King's treasury or the Wizard's spellbooks, a more sophisticated lock is a logical answer, and it is fair to assume that the richer echelons of society would have thief-locksmiths in their employ.

However, for the braver souls among you, this basic system can be adapted to create something that is both realistic and playable, inheriting the simplicity of this basic table, but adding so much more.

THROUGH THE AGES

If it were true that the ancient civilisations of our world had each developed their own particular locks and keys, or if the lockmaking styles of Europe had changed radically at the time of the Vikings or during the Middle Ages, a realistic adaptation of lockmaking would only be possible on a campaign-by-campaign basis. Instead, all the basic designs of lock we know of — discount electronic methods — were known and used by all the civilisations of the ancient and medieval world. The skills of the locksmith of Greek and Roman times were not so very different from those of the latter half of the eighteenth century. Consequently, it is possible to envisage a single realistic system to cover all campaigns.

BASIC DESIGNS

Historically, there were three basic types of lock. Within these, there were various ways for the locksmith to make his design more difficult to open without the proper key, ie, locks of Levels 2 or above.

The following section describes the three basic designs. The improvements made to each are outlined, and some indications are given as to their use. Finally, the section is completed by considering keyless combination locks. The operation of each lock is kept simple, although enough detail of the mechanics is given for the DM to have an idea of what it is a thief has to do to successfully Open Locks.

Cylinder Locks: Widely used in Egypt, cylinder locks were sometimes of great size, with keys over three feet long not unknown, carried around by slaves or servants. Often the size of the key was a mark of prestige and wealth.

At first, the lock was fitted to the outside of the door. An early improvement, however, was to fit the lock to the inside of the door, with an opening for hand or key to pass through. The lock itself consisted of a case, securely mounted to the door; a bolt, that slid horizontally in and out; and several pegs. The bolt was fashioned with a number of holes, and when closed, the pegs fell into the holes under their own weight, preventing the bolt from being withdrawn.

The lock was opened using a key that had a number of pegs corresponding to those on the lock. The key was offered to the bolt, and as it was raised the pegs on the key pushed upwards the pegs holding the bolt in place. Only the right key would raise the pegs the right distance, forming a straight line so that the bolt could be withdrawn. If just one of the pegs on the key was too short, a peg on the door would remain to hold the bolt in place, and if the pegs on the key were too long, they themselves would keep the bolt in place.

A further improvement came with the production of 'sickle'-shaped keys, which had to be inserted into a hole in the bolt itself, and then raised.

Cylinder locks were usually made of wood, although ivory was sometimes used for the keys, and these could be further decorated with bronze or gold. They were used all over the world, and the fact that they were made of wood, and therefore did not freeze, made them particularly suitable for colder countries, including Britain. These days, we are more familiar with cylinder locks of a more sophisticated nature, almost universally known as Yales.

Sliding Locks: A sliding lock consists of two sections. A 'box' contains the mechanism, and a separate 'shackle' contains a tubular pin and a set of springs. The lock is opened by sliding the key into the keyhole; as it goes in, it compresses the springs to a level position, allowing the shackle to be withdrawn. The lock is closed simply by sliding the shackle back into the box so that the springs are compressed as they pass through the keyhole, then expand once inside the box.

This basic design could be improved by adding flanges to the inside of the box, located so that they catch the springs when they expand, making it more difficult to open the lock without the key. The security of such locks depended primarily on the length and shape of the key.

Sliding locks were used on padlocks in both medieval Europe and the ancient world. They were most common in Arabic, Persian, and Oriental countries, although the Vikings and Romans also had them. Those used as padlocks acquired secret flaps to hide the keyhole.

Turning Locks: At its simplest, a turning lock consists of a box and a bolt, the former merely holding the latter in place. A key turned in the lock catches a part of the bolt and pushes it in the direction the key is turned. Turned enough times, the key causes the bolt to be withdrawn from a recess in the door or frame, and the door could be opened. Turning the key in the opposite direction draws the bolt back into the recess. The oldest forms of this type of lock always required two or more turns of the key — and where the quality of wood was poor, the local craftsmen had to use longer bolts, and consequently the key had to be turned more times.

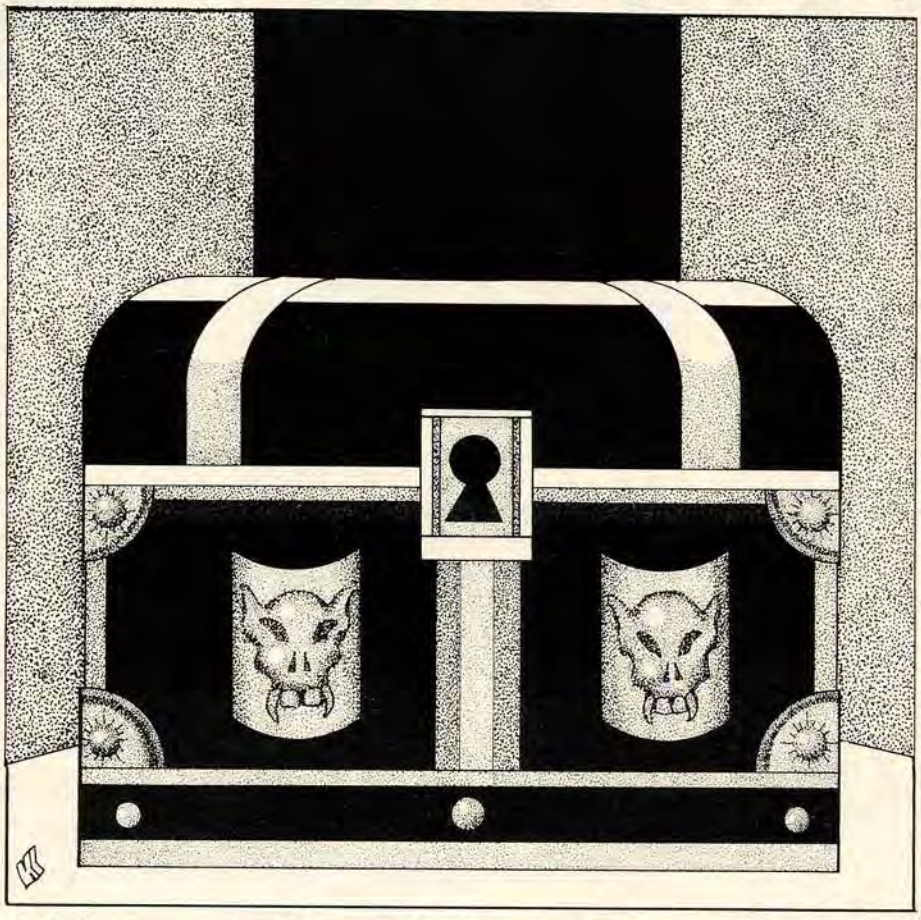
The disadvantage of so simple a lock was that anyone who had access to the right kind of tool could negotiate the keyhole and engage the notch on the bolt. Therefore, obstructions in and around the keyhole were introduced, called 'wards'. The aim was to prevent keys of the wrong shape being inserted; only the key whose

In his hey-day, Sarkeonnel had been a master thief. Now he will show her how to uncover the secrets of a rival's locks. "No-one knows more about opening a lock than a locksmith," he says.

end corresponded with the 'talons' and 'notches' of the lock was supposed to be able to gain entry. The advent of 'master' or 'skeleton' keys, however, meant that wards on their own were inadequate.

As a next step, lockmakers proceeded to 'bush' the centres of their keyholes. This involved placing a metal spike — the 'bush' — inside the keyhole which prevented the key being inserted unless it had a matching hole in the centre.

Turning locks were widely used both as padlocks and doorlocks, particularly by the Greeks and Romans. The Romans were so advanced as to be able to create tiny locks, the keys for which went on the end of a ring — a 'keyring'. Such an item represented a badge of office. The Egyptians had turning locks also, only they tended to use them for padlocks only. Although the two developments described — wards and bushes — are attributed to medieval times, simpler wards were used by the Romans and others.



The Keyless Combination Lock: Although not a basic lock type, but a rarity confined almost exclusively to China, the combination lock was a design that Europe gradually became aware of. A DM can ignore it if the campaign is not 'medieval', or if it has no contact with 'oriental' influences. The lock's design and operation resembles similar locks used today to secure bicycles, whereby a number of letters or numerals have to be aligned. The more there are to align, the harder the locks are to open, although given unlimited time, this lock can be breached by even the most unskilled thief.

The underlying principles on which the lock operates are the same as for the cylinder locks described above.

The THIEF-LOCKSMITH

Having considered locks historically, it becomes obvious that it would be unrealistic to let the maximum level of lock that a thief can make be equivalent to his level. If this were so, it would mean that thieves learned the principles of every kind of lock before first level. The thief-locksmith, by the same criteria, would be able to apply levels of complication to all locks at just second level, and so on.

It would be more realistic for thieves to be trained gradually in the basic principles of different types of locks. Thus, at first level, they would have only a basic knowledge of the three (or four) different types. In other words, first level thieves would use the existing Open Locks percentages on all Level 1 locks. Thereafter, the process of education might become more specialised. Possibly, one type of lock might be more common than others in the thieves' place of training. It would be entirely natural, for example, for a particular Locksmiths' Guild to have a tradition of building cylinder locks, since the founders of the guild were most highly trained in this area, and succeeding generations of locksmiths would have inherited this tendency through their training. It follows, then, that the Thieves' Guild would have mirrored this specialization, training its members primarily in the arts of opening cylinder locks. For both thief and thief-locksmith, training in the arts of making/breaking other types would be available (although not to such high levels as the premier type, perhaps), but this would have to come in later life.

Thus, to add a little additional colour to the role of the thief, the DM might wish to introduce the following notion. At each level rise, a thief (or thief-locksmith) may learn one level of complexity in one type of lock. This then offers thief characters two possibilities; either to specialise, so that in later life the best locks of that type will be within their grasp; or to spread the skills across all types, so that the characters need never be frustrated by the simplest lock of an unfamiliar type. The DM, likewise, will find a number of interesting possibilities opening up if this system is adopted. Of this, more anon.

To account for this, a thief's skill (proficiency) with a particular lock is added to the basic percentage chance that the thief has to open any lock. This can be calculated as being equal to the added degree of difficulty for the highest level of that lock type with which the thief is familiar. Additionally, due to the similarity of keyless combination and cylinder locks, learning the principles of an advanced level cylinder lock, imparts a rudimentary knowledge of the workings of combination locks, and vice versa. In game terms, this can be expressed as an ability to make/break locks of the second type 2 levels below the level of the first.

In case this is all getting a little deep, let's consider the career of one Jaina. She starts her career, not in the Thieves' Guild (unlike some others of her more nimble friends) but as the apprentice to Sarkeonnel, a master locksmith. At first she learns about metals, how to file and work them. Gradually she begins to understand how mechanical locks work, and how simple traps function. She finishes her apprenticeship, able to deal with crude traps and locks with a little more skill than the average man-about-town, and with a working knowledge of the four types of craftsmen's locks. She is a first-level thief-locksmith.

On that day, Sarkeonnel confides in her. In his hey-day he had been a master thief, a notorious house-breaker. Now reformed, he still knows a thing or two about overcoming the obstacles of an unfamiliar ward. He will show these to her, if she will stay on as his assistant. It will be useful extra training for her, she can learn how to uncover the secrets of a rival's locks. He produces one of her own locks, a sliding lock she had completed just the day before.

'I've lost the key,' he says, 'Open it for me.'

Jaina picks the lock, after a few moments of inexperienced fumbling. Sarkeonnel grins.

'No-one knows more about opening a lock than a locksmith,' he says.

At this stage, as a first level thief, Jaina's chance to Open Locks is 25% (**AD&D**® Players Handbook, p28 — no Dex adjustment) or 15% (**D&D**® Players Handbook, p44). She now chooses to study sliding locks more vigorously, and by the time she reaches 2nd level (adventuring a little on the side, perhaps), she has mastered this variety to level 2. Her test at the end of this period is to open one of her master's creations, a Level 3 sliding lock.

Table 1: Locks, Material Costs

Level of lock Type of Lock	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cylinder	10	25	30	50	80	125	150	175	200	225
Sliding	15	30	70	150	225	250	275	300	325	350
Turning	10	30	70	150	225	275	350	450	900	1500
Combination	40	50	65	80	150	300	325	350	375	400

Table 2: Locks, Suggested Purchase Prices

Level of lock Type of Lock	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cylinder	15	45	80	130	200	400	800	2000	5000	10000
Sliding	20	40	100	225	400	650	1500	3000	6500	15000
Turning	15	60	140	300	600	1000	1500	2400	4500	8000
Combination	80	120	200	300	500	900	1750	3500	8000	20000

You will note that in the mid-range of levels, the materials cost of different types of locks rise dramatically – this reflects the fact that the thief-locksmith will be better able to use superior materials as a result of greater experience and training, but that after the point where the best materials possible are used, most of the increase in costs will come through paying for the craftsman's time and skills. Each level of lock takes twice as long to make as the level below – a level 0 lock takes 30 minutes.

Adopting the system just described, her chance of opening the lock is now a basic 29% (or 20% in Basic), +5% for her level of skill with sliding locks, -10% for the level of the lock itself. If she tries to open a crude kobold turning padlock (level 0), her chance is 29% (or 20%), no bonus for her skill with sliding locks, but 5% bonus for the level 0 lock. If Sarkeonnel produces a level 7 turning lock, she just won't be able to cope with it.

She reaches 3rd level, and acquires a 3rd level of mastery at sliding locks, before Sarkeonnel is arrested; he just couldn't resist dabbling at his former profession. Jaina leaves the city of her training, and moves to another, where hardship forces her to be more of a thief than a locksmith. But she finds that most of the doors there are barred not with sliding locks, but with cylinder ones. She tries to open one during a burglary attempt, in a house where she would normally have expected to find locks of no worse than level 3. And so it proves, but her chance is reduced with this unfamiliar type; instead of being 33% (25%), +10% for her skill, -10% for the lock, she finds in this case that her skill counts for nothing.

Naturally she cannot go on like this. She starts training in cylinder locks, and as time goes by, now an 8th level thief, she manages to become a Level 6 cylinder lock expert. In addition, she has Level 4 ability with combination locks. This means that her abilities with different types of locks is now quite varied: in Advanced she has a 82% chance with cylinder locks, 72% with combination locks, 62% with sliding locks and the standard 57% with turning locks — all these at Level 1. At this point she retires; she has earned enough to live comfortably on, and besides, in a city where every thief is trained to deal with the cylinder, her ability to turn out reasonably difficult sliding locks is going to be quite an asset...

LOW-LEVEL THIEVES

It should be recognised by the DM that introducing a system of this sort will pose a few additional difficulties to low-level thieves. The first time they run up against a lock of level 2 or above they are going to be at a disadvantage. This is partially offset by the extra consideration given to the defeating of the kinds of crude bars that the humanoid races are going to be able to discover. Clearly though, the DM is going to have to act in a responsible manner when placing more difficult locks into the campaign. It's no good putting level 7 locks on everything!

Actually, while we're looking at lock difficulties, there is one last complication to the whole process that you might wish to bring in. The simplest cylinder locks are more complicated than the simplest of turning locks, while at the top of the scale turning locks can be harder to open than even the most fiendish cylinder. Clearly, the creation of these different types of locks, at their different levels of difficulty, is going to be governed by cost.

CAMPAIGN POSSIBILITIES

Adopting this system for your campaign will allow thieves to enjoy a much more varied role. A number of possibilities have been mentioned already, but in this section I shall conclude by drawing attention to a few more.

Traps: All the arguments that apply to the creating/overcoming of locks can be applied just as easily to traps. Obviously, some traps are going to be easier to find and disarm than others. Following the logic of this article, there would also be a scale of difficulty with regard to their design and manufacture. In fact, the skills of locksmith/lockbreaker and trapster are very closely entwined, and one could imagine that a locksmith might choose to research trap design in order to make the chests and boxes he sells even more attractive to those who want to keep their valuables safe. A simple system would be to treat traps as a fifth category of locks, so that a thief-locksmith might chooses to learn one level of traps skill instead of a cylinder or sliding level, at the next rise in experience level. Or, traps might require two categories, one representing the skill of detection, the other for disarming. A thief need not have equivalent levels in each. One does need to be careful in this, however, or low level thieves will have so few skills that they will be virtually useless, and the DM will have to increase the preponderance of 0 and 1st level traps and locks in order for thieves to have any chance at all.

Good Thieves: All the way through this article, I have tried to paint a picture of thieves and locksmiths being two halves of the one whole. If the thief-locksmith pairing is accepted, the restrictions on alignment given in the **Players Handbook** can be forgotten. One might then find adventuring locksmiths, skilled men and women who join adventurers' parties, not for personal gain, but in order to aid them in their tasks. Obviously, the 'good' thief would not have some of the normal thief's skills, like Pick Pockets or Hide In Shadows, nor could they be allowed the Backstab skill, but the DM might balance this restriction by allowing additional 'good' skills. These might include Valuing, the ability to offer an increasingly accurate prediction of just what an item is worth, or Contact skills, whereby the thief has an increasing ability to find the right person to contact for information, or to influence the local legal system.

One might even imagine that neutral thieves would skate a precarious balance between the two extremes, unable to resist the occasional gem for themselves. If this system is accepted, thieves will be able to hide themselves more completely in society, and will no longer be the guys in leather that the paladins chase!

Adding the skills of lockmaking or trapmaking to the other abilities of the thief class makes it a much fuller and exciting character class. This system places additional stress on that particular speciality of the thief that marks the class out from the others. Evil thieves can fill out their off-duty hours devising traps, safe in the knowledge that they are not going to be seen as the automatic enemy of every LG fighter in town; neutral thieves can exploit the ambiguity of the 'new' class, profiteering from the disguise of locksmith; and the new goodguy can bring new skills to the party, without having to be watched all the time! And they will all find themselves up against the patient creators of the locks and traps they seek to disarm; an invisible enemy who might just produce a 'weapon' so new, that the party's lockbreaker has to admit defeat!

Chris Barlow

Further Reading

For those who would like to do more research into locks might find **Locks and Keys** by J Eras a most useful source of material.

ILLUMINATIONS

Home Taping Is Killing Gaming....

Even though role-playing games have been with us for over 10 years, most members of the public are still unaware of them, or, at best, have only a vague understanding of the genre. Staff in gameshops are faced daily with the difficult task of trying to explain this curious pastime to bold enquirers. It is not an easy concept to outline in the time normally available to either the assistant or the customer.

But perhaps all this is about to change. Standard Games have revealed the nature of the much-heralded Secret Ingredient in their new **Dragonroar** game. It turns out to be *(ta-ra)* an audio cassette, recorded by professional actors! It takes the purchaser on a page-by-page guided tour of the rulebook; explaining, introducing and answering questions. Side 2 provides a complete solo adventure, **A Matter of Honour**. The difficult task of creating atmosphere is well-handled by the actors, along with explanations of the rule mechanics involved. The player will have already created a character, following instructions given at the end of Side 1 and will be fully conversant with the tricky polyhedral dice. These are identified by colour initially (the tape directs the player to 'pick up the green dice' for example), followed by an explanation of the capabilities of each die.

So there it is, the great secret is finally out. I think it was worth waiting for. Dragonroar will almost certainly be the game that is recommended when a prospective customer asks how they can get into role-playing. The rest of the package is impressive as well; A4 boxed, with character sheets, a party adventure (**Kalanth's Dive**), reference sheets, full dice set, mapping sheets, floor plans and colour counters. The box is full colour, for that all-important shelf appeal. It ought to be a winner, but only time will tell if it will appeal to experienced players.

Coinciding with the game's release, Standard have 37 **Dragonroar** 25mm figures available. These include the Killer Penguin and Giant Warhedgehogs featured in the game. Eventually, there will be over 100 monsters in this range, which leaves plenty of scope for another three or four loonie ones.

Linking slickly, **Dragonroar** was launched at the **British Toy and Hobby Fair**, held at Earls Court back in January. This is the premiere toy trade fair in Britain, and gaming organisations are increasingly taking advantage of the opportunities offered by exhibiting there to get their goods before a broader market. As well as Standard, Games Workshop, TSR, Citadel, Games of Liverpool, Chris Harvey Games and Grenadier Models UK were all in evidence.

Citadel are now moving into plastic figures. Initially these will be large-sized (or 'toy soldier sized' as Citadel describe them), and are intended for use with the **Fighting Fantasy** books. By Christmas 1986, Citadel will have plastic figures in the smaller size, which most people still call 25mm, despite the fact that many manufacturers' products are obviously considerably bigger than this. Citadel are calling their plastic figures 30mm in recognition of this fact.

Back to the Earls Court binge. Chris Harvey Games had a new scenario for **Justice Inc** (Hero Games) on show, called **Trail of the Golden Spike**. Chris also pointed out that he has been able to *reduce* the price of the colour-cover **T&T** adventures mentioned in **Illuminations** 22. These are now just £1.95. The T&T rule set is also down in price at £5.95. The colour covers are going so well that CHG are going ahead with a full colour box for the basic set. This will be available in March.

The progress of **Flagship** is a source of quiet satisfaction for CHG, for with the fold of their only rival (a US publication), they are now the only prozine devoted to pbm. The majority of their coverage relates to the big, computer-moderated games such as **Tribes of Crane**, **Starweb** and **Crasimoff's World**, but such favoured postal titles as **Diplomacy** are also included. Flagship is published quarterly, and costs £1.50 a copy, or £5 for a year's subscription.

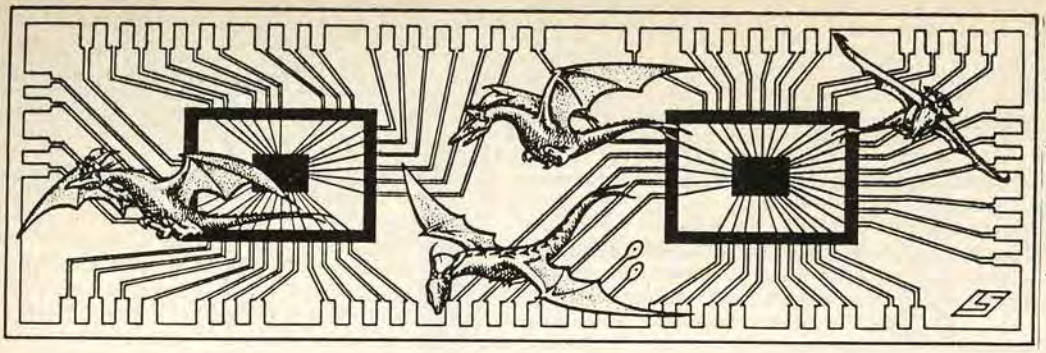
Transatlantic Tales

Seeing as Doug Cowie seems to have left us a little more room than usual, we'll use this space for an in-depth look at those new products for various TSR rpg systems we glossed over last time. Before we start, I'd better issue all the statutory warnings that go with an announcement of this kind. All titles, dates and prices are provisional; as they used to say at the start of *Stingray*, 'anything can happen in the next half hour'. Don't go pestering your local shopkeeper until we've said that's it's coming over for sure.... and even then be understanding when he says that it hasn't arrived yet....

We mentioned that there were to be several titles for the two latest rpgs. The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES®** game will receive five modules and four accessory packs. The modules are entitled **Cats Paw** (which will feature **Alpha Flight®**), **Thunder over Jotunheim** (Mighty **Thor™**?), **The Last Resort**, **Faultline** and **Deadly Dimensions of Dr Strange™** (MH5-9). MHACC5 **Project Wideawake** will feature the **X-Men®**, MHACC6 is to be a boxed game, provisionally entitled **New York, New York**. The contents of MHACC7 **Concrete Jungle** we can but guess at, but MHACC8 **Weapons Locker** seems self-explanatory.

Also growing, the **INDIANA JONES®** rpg. The next scenarios are to be IJ4 **Indiana Jones and the Golden Goddess**, IJ5 **Nepal Nightmare**, IJ6 **The 4th Nail** and IJ7 **Case of the Arnhem Ring**. Presumably, not all of these are rpg adaptations of film scripts, or Harrison Ford is going to wear out his whip. Also due, IJACC1 **Judge's Survival Pack**, and IJACC2 **The World of Indiana Jones**, which look like worthwhile developments of the original rules.

With new items being produce for these games at a rate of nearly one a month, is there any room for the other systems, I hear you ask? Well, the **STAR FRONTIERS®** game has a few goodies on their way, in addition to those mentioned briefly last time. SFAD5 **Bugs In The System** is one from the Product Development team here in Britain. There's SFAD6 **Dark Side of the Moon**. For you **KNIGHT HAWKS®** comes SFKH3 **Face of the Enemy**, and SFKH4 **War Machine**, and there are two accessory packs for the system, namely SFACC3 the **STAR FRONTIERS BATTLESYSTEM™** and SFACC4 **Zebulon's Guide To Frontier Space**.



Micro Reviews

RUNES OF ZENDOS

Dorcas Software
48K Spectrum, Commodore 64

Cast your mind back to the dim and distant past, when a new company brought you **Oracle's Cave**, a menu-driven graphic adventure, in which you had 5 days (game time) to defeat the Oracle and escape the caves. At the time of release the game was very highly rated, and time has done little to diminish this feeling.

Runes of Zendos is Dorcas' first adventure since Oracle's Cave and again is a graphic adventure, though this time with no time-limit or menu. This is a real adventure with full sentence input, characters to deal with (as opposed to the fight or runaway option of the earlier game), and many objects to manipulate.

The scenario is that many years ago the principality of Dorcasia was a happy, jolly place until the wicked wizard of Zendos overran the place, and to keep the population under control, he imprisoned each of the twelve months in an hour-glass which has been hidden in the wizard's castle. You, as the intrepid adventurer, must find the hour-glasses, release the months, and restore normality to Dorcasia. All sounds pretty standard? You couldn't be more wrong.

The joy of this game is that instead of one adventure you have twelve separate ones (one adventure for each month). Each adventure is set up in a different way, though to be fair the characters who inhabit the castle can be dealt with the same way in all twelve adventures, either by killing them, being friendly to them, or by presenting them with an object. The objects are also the same in the various adventures but the spells you pick up on your way are put to different uses in each game.

The real test of the adventure comes with the freeing of the months from the hour-glass. For this you have to translate sets of runes (hence the title) into English. To help you, there are various clues spread around the game (there is even one on the cassette inlay, though I couldn't find it). A little tip in the playing of the game: I know I'm preaching to the converted, but always *examine* objects before using them. 'Nuff said?'

The combat in the game is handled in the following manner. Whenever you meet a character, the computer displays how many strength points each of you is worth. Your strength can be increased by various weapons. After each individual round of combat, points are deducted from you and the enemy character to signify wounds, though you can replenish your strength by eating, and as you start the game with a good supply of food, and find plenty on the way, this does not present a problem.

The status display is one of the most useful I've ever seen. Not only does it give you current strength, score, food left, objects carried etc, but also the current spells you know, and runic clues you have found. Very helpful to say the least.

The graphics are very good. The castle is well drawn; all movement is very smooth, although the combat section seems to be you and your opponent taking turns to head-butt each other to the sounds of computerized thuds. The characters look as they are meant to be, especially when they attack you.

In conclusion, Runes of Zendos is one step beyond Dorcas' last release. By incorporating traditional adventure features with their own unique ideas, they have managed to produce a very good game.

D J Robinson

THE WRATH OF MAGRA

Master Visions
48K Spectrum

Wrath of Magra was the game that Carnell Software were working on when they went bust. Happily, though, the game has been bought by Master Visions, and released by them. The game itself is billed as a follow-up to **The Black Crystal** and **Volcanic Dungeon**, though an adventure game more different from Black Crystal is hard to imagine.

The game comes in a video-style box, containing two tapes, an instruction book, and a guide entitled **The Book of Shadows**. I suggest you read this before loading the game, as it contains the history of the earth, a very interesting account that eventually tells you why you have to find and kill the witch Magra; a list of beings you will meet, how they affect you and how to deal with them; and lastly, the most important part, a list of spells you can attempt to cast, the ingredients you need for each, and at what times of the month each spell can work. This information will affect the actions you take while playing, and the book is a good read anyway.

The game is in three parts contained on two tapes, each recorded twice. The tapes load easily, with a title page showing a picture of Magra. Part 1 of the adventure has you exploring a small town; buying, selling and finding objects that should help you later in the game. Parts 2 and 3 are the more traditional explore-and-kill variety.

Keeping in line with the current trend for graphic adventures, each location not only has a text description, it is also accompanied by a picture. These take about three seconds to appear, and are very well drawn. If you don't like pretty pictures there is the facility to turn them off. Unfortunately, this does not clear the screen of the offending graphics; rather, the last location drawn is left up on the screen. This can be a bit confusing when the text informs you that *'you are in a dark cave'* while the picture shows a green field on a sunny day. I did find, though, that after a few minutes I managed to get used to it.

One of the most interesting aspects of the game is time. While you are exploring, fighting, etc, the hours pass by, day turns to night and night to day. As you have to sleep at regular intervals to stop yourself from losing strength points, it is useful to know how long it's been since your last sleep. Equally important, as the days pass by, the phases of the moon alter. This affects the game in so much as certain spells can only be cast at certain times of the month, although another function of the game allows you to store successfully-cast spells in a spiritual cloth for later use.

Inputting commands is done using either the normal verb and noun method, or by more complex sentences. A glossary of words the computer understands is in the instruction book; it also understands most words used in the text.

Combat is handled in a novel way. When you meet a monster, the display panel shows you what percentage chance you have of killing the beast. If you wound the monster, the percentage is increased by 10, while if you are wounded it is decreased by 10. Also, each wound you receive causes your strength to decrease until it reaches zero, when you die.

In conclusion, The Wrath of Magra is an exceptionally good adventure, well written and presented, with a vast amount of atmosphere and the best background material I have ever seen.

D J Robinson

POWERS & PERILS: Tower of the Dead

Tower of the Dead is the first adventure to be produced specifically for the **Powers & Perils** game. It comes boxed, though for the life of me I cannot think why, as it contains only the 56-page module booklet and a three-fold referee control screen.

Turning to the control screen first, this is not simply a **P&P** GM's screen, but has tables and information specifically for **TotD** and an index to the module booklet, as well as general information for P&P. It will be interesting to see whether future modules contain a similar control screen.

As to the booklet, it is well laid out and artwork is of a reasonable standard. Detailed, unambiguous maps are provided within the main text where necessary, but unfortunately there is not an enlarged version of the map which appears on the rear of the box.

The detail in the scenario booklet is extensive and requires careful reading and re-reading by the GM before any thought of play. One annoying feature of such detail is that in the history there is mention of places not marked on the map; I found this more frustrating than anything, as the locations are not necessary for playing the scenario.

The plotline is such that there is little room for independent thought by the players as they are led from one part of the scenario to another. However, there is so much detail in this adventure that I would recommend that the GM encourage players to take all options open to them: if they do not, large sections of the module are skipped and it is a shame to see such material going to waste.

The plot concerns the Lich Nilgeranthrib (a rather contrived name if ever there was one) and his wish to rule over Thaliba. The party of 4-6 *experienced* (and that *is* important) characters must endeavour to destroy him.

All in all this scenario is very detailed, well thought out, and runs smoothly from section to section. My only worry is at the number of times a party of adventurers could easily be wiped out, and in some cases through little fault of their own. However with some sections altered to avoid this, and the author's own caution heeded, Tower of the Dead is a formidable challenge to any experienced group of P&P players and is recommended in spite of what may seem to be a high price.

Mike Dean

DRAGONLANCE™:

Dragons of Flame is the second in a series of modules started by the excellent **Dragons of Despair**. Written by Douglas Niles, who was 'design staff' on the first module, **DL2** retains many of **DL1**'s strengths of detail, clarity and layout, although the sheer volume of material is considerably less. The plot follows straight on from the end of DL1.

The early encounters are quick-fire stuff and work well except when the DM is required to arrest the party — always good for an argument! Some of my playtesters had trouble keeping the numerous NPC names straight, but that's probably not the module's fault.

The final section of the module features a little traditional cave-work and a huge castle *('You enter a corridor over 100' wide,*

LORDS of CREATION: The Yeti Sanction

The Yeti Sanction does not have any direct plot links with its predecessor, **Horn of Roland**, and may therefore be used independently of it. However, it would appear that The Yeti Sanction is intended to be one of a continuing line of boxed **Lords of Creation** scenarios specifically designed to lead characters through from neophyte to lords of creation: at the end of **YS**, characters can be led to the next in line, **Omegakron**. The intention that each scenario be bought in turn is also seen in the fact that YS includes some new, additional rules for cars and special equipment, and a LoC gamesmaster screen. I cannot help but feel these should have been marketed separately to give the LoC GM more freedom of choice on what to purchase.

The scenario itself begins as a straightforward espionage mission to discover whether YETI (Young Everest Terrorist International) are responsible for the kidnap of the US secretary of state. If so, the party is to destroy the YETI organisation and rescue the secretary of state. Needless to say, with a system like LoC things do not turn out quite as they at first seem.

Well, if I said any more I would spoil the adventure for potential players, so instead I will voice my only niggle with the plot. This concerns the hijack sequence where the terrorists announce that *'This plane has been commandeered by the People's Liberated Soviet of Grenada!'* — how such nonsense can find its way into what is otherwise a very good module is beyond me!

As with HoR, the approach to the plot is linear, allowing little freedom of choice for the players, but at least this means none of the material is wasted, — and players are unlikely to notice. All in all, YS is a well presented, enjoyable and eminently playable scenario. Its only failing is its somewhat high price!

Mike Dean

LANDS OF ADVENTURE

Written by Lee Gold, author of **Land of the Rising Sun** and the person behind the amateur press association **Alarums & Excursions, Lands of Adventure** is FGU's latest role-playing offering. The boxed set consists of a 32-page rulebook and a 28-page supplement containing 'modular culture packs' for Mythic Greece and Medieval England.

First the rules; a character is described by 11 characteristics, each in the range of 1-20. These are not completely random, for while Strength = 1d20, Constitution = Strength / 2 + 1d10. Alternatively a character can be generated by distributing 110 + 2d10 points among the 11 characteristics. These characteristics determine a character's basic rating in the 10 skill categories of communication, knowledge, magic, manipulation, miracle, movement, observation, persuasion, missile and melee weapons. It is then necessary to decide on the limited number of specialist skills the character is to have and which category the skills fall into such as climbing walls - movement; and storytelling - communication. For these specialised skills the basic category scores can then be improved upon by experience and learning. It is important to note that although a paragraph or so is given on each skill category there is no definitive listing of specialised skills so this means some extra work. However it does mean you are free to create the character you want. This sort of freedom of choice is something which permeates the rules.

Spells are of four types: Compulsion, Energy, Enhancement and Illusion. An individual spell is one of the character's specialised skills and is constructed cookbook style by the player, who chooses the spell type, eg compulsion, and the power of the spell type, ie from merely inhibiting the victim's behaviour to totally controlling it. The range, volume intensity and duration of the spell all add to the complexity of the spell skill and can be altered at a small loss in spell skill success chance. Spells in the same family but of a different power can also be cast but at half the base chance of success. Some guidance is given in the rules in describing the spell families and in a comprehensive listing of spell 'recipes'.

A character's vitality is measured by Life Points, lowered when badly injured — at 0LP a character is dead; Body Points, lowered by

Dragons of Flame

200' high and stretching as far as you can see'). The actual task is interesting but seemed to work out rather easily for my players.

My reservations about this module all relate to its role as a link section in a much larger adventure. The players have to go along with the plot to make any sense of it at all. A DM can always force a reluctant party back into the plot, but in view of the lack of real freedom, keeping up interest might be a problem. The module also seemed fairly short, and would make little sense outside the context of the DragonLance series. I really can't recommend it on its own, or as a place to start the Dragonlance series. As one of the series, however, it has 'Dallas appeal'.

Steve Hampshire

AD&D®: When a Star Falls

A reviewer should not only be but seem to be unbiased, so when it comes to reviewing the UK series of modules I have something of a problem. The modules are produced by the same company that produces this magazine and the problem is that the modules are very good! The storylines are sound and interesting, with enough plot twists to keep the players on their toes; the DM is presented with all the information needed clearly and concisely, with errors minor or non-existent.

UK4, a one-off module for 6-10 3rd to 5th level characters, is no exception. It involves a shooting star and a place of renown called the Tower of the Heavens, which is occupied by sages who are able to give glimpses into the future. To tell more would be to spoil things for the players.

As in previous modules an outline is given of the expected events but once again this is far more an aid to the DM than a restriction on the players as the encounters are not required to occur in any strict order.

Looking for criticisms I would say that the map of the region lacks labels for the rivers and mountains, and there is perhaps an excessive use of 'non-standard monsters' from the **Fiend Folio** and the unnecessary **Monster Manual II**. If like me you don't own a copy of MMII this does mean some extra work either expanding the brief descriptions given or substituting other monsters for those from MMII.

UK4 should provide at least three enjoyable play sessions, consisting as it does of several medium sized encounters with no pitched battle. It may no longer be true for many products but as far as the UK series of AD&D modules goes, British is best!

Chris Hunter

Product Information

Tower of the Dead (£8.45) and **The Yeti Sanction** (£9.95) are from Avalon Hill, 650 High Road, North Finchley, London N12

DL2 and **UK4** (£4.50 each) are from TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, Cambridge

Samurai Blades (£9.95) is from Standard Games & Publications, Arlon House, Station Rd, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8LF

Lands of Adventure (£9.95) is distributed by Games of Liverpool, 89 Victoria St, Liverpool L1

SAMURAI BLADES

Samurai Blades, from the same stable as **Siege** and **Cry Havoc!** can be used with them or by itself. The game is set in Japan during the Shogunate civil wars and the provided scenarios cover rebellion, ambush, and putting down brigands, while the character types include samurai, monks, ninjas and their retainers.

The contents comprise playing pieces, two maps, booklets of rules, scenarios and historical background, card reference sheets and an icosahedral die (d10). The playing pieces are coloured card, printed on both sides so that they are reversible; thus two cards can show a character fit, wounded, stunned or dead. With horsemen, there are other cards showing them mounted. Still more cards show wagons, horses, barricades and lanterns. The maps show a village and a temple, and as with the other Standard games of this type, a hex cloth or other hex sheets are a necessity if the players ever want to get beyond short range on the missile tables.

The rules are thorough and seem to cover all necessary points — including *seppuku*, a 'glorious suicide' by which defeated players may remove their last samurai piece, provided, of course, that they have written a suitable 'death poem' first! Special rules for monks, ninja and the use of lanterns at night are included.

The mechanics of the game are straightforward, and once the players become familiar with the basic rules, the game progresses at a reasonable pace as all the necessary movement and combat tables are reprinted on the two player cards provided. Each turn is divided into two phases, one for each player, and each player's phase is subdivided, clearly, into six actions which must, or may, be taken. All movement depends upon terrain and all combat is decided using the d10 and cross-referencing on the appropriate tables, modifying where necessary for cover and special abilities.

The only criticisms I have are about the poor quality of the box in which the game arrives (how about a wallet?) and the limited size of the maps. At least Standard do make hex mats as well! Overall, this is a good game, well produced and straightforward to play. Winning, however, is not so easy!

Jon Conner

injury — at 0BP a character is comatose; and Energy Points, lowered by spell casting, moving quietly etc — at 0EP a character is exhausted. This system requires more bookkeeping than simple hit points but is worth it for the added control it gives you over your character's actions.

Weapon skill is modified by ease of use of the weapon and how heavy it is for the character; weapon damage is fixed, determined by weapon weight. The player can 'control' how the character fights, reducing damage taken by dodging (expending EP instead of BP) and parrying or striking more quickly by expending EP.

The 'modular culture packs' offer some interesting information but they are not my style of frp. I prefer loosely-based historical rpgs such as TOP SECRET® or BOOT HILL® games, set in Hollywood-style versions of the real world. The culture packs present more of an historical reconstruction, with true myths and working magic providing the fantasy elements, which for me just don't fit. Having said that, the packs are well detailed, if only 14 or so pages each, and are presented using the same section numbering as the rulebook, with a combined index at the back of each. They both contain several monsters, rules expansions, scenarios, and as you would expect details of the culture.

It is obvious that a lot of thought has gone into not only the rules themselves but also their layout. Although at 32 pages the rulebook may seem short compared to others, the small print is packed with detail. All the major rules sections are there, as are many nice touches that aid both game mechanics and roleplay. Lands of Adventure is definitely not for the beginner, however, as the amount of 'freedom' would almost certainly leave them floundering. If on the other hand you are a veteran gamer who enjoys perusing new games systems and has a few pounds to spare then this is a must.

As for its chances as an individual rules system, I have grave reservations. The intention seems to be to publish several modular culture packs which means it's going to be very difficult to publish other 'support' such as modules. Consequently Lands of Adventure's chances of gaining a foothold with so many other systems on the market must be slim.

Chris Hunter

MARVEL SUPERHEROES™: Lone Wolves

One of the problems that TSR and Marvel were bound to experience with the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game is that so many of the Marvel characters are loners. This makes it rather difficult to design playable scenarios for them as most of the players will, of course, want to be heroes rather than mere sidekicks. But the scenarios must be written; characters such as Spiderman, Hulk and Daredevil are too popular to be ignored. The only possible solution is a 'team up' style adventure in which a bunch of heroes who live in the same area bump into each other during a case and decide to work together. Hence **Lone Wolves**, which brings together a collection of very different characters.

Having said that, Lone Wolves has been very well put together. Daredevil is obviously the showpiece character of the scenario, and as he lives in New York, a city which seems to house around 90% of all known Superheroes in the Marvel Universe, finding partners is no problem. Those chosen are Black Widow (who was at one time DD's partner/girlfriend but has since moved on in the comics) plus Power Man (token negro) and Iron Fist (sop to Kung Fu fanatics), two fairly minor characters whose careers were saved when some bright spark at Marvel asked why Superheroes never used their powers to make a living. Thus we have Daredevil, whose secret identity is that of a leading lawyer; a former Russian spy; and the 'Heroes for Hire' detective agency on the case. Not, you might think, the sort of people who indulge in boring slugfests. You bet.

I really like this scenario. It has a lovely air of reality about it. Unlike the other scenarios so far produced, which are essentially Superhero versus Supervillain, this one is about Superheroes fighting time. OK, so the master criminals are Supervillains but there are lots of ordinary people involved and plenty of opportunity is provided for the players to indulge in detective work and to infiltrate the villains' organisation. They even have to do deals with other members of the criminal fraternity in order to get the men they want. Add to this a fairly intelligent bunch of baddies several of whom actually try to outwit the heroes instead of out-punch them and you have a highly entertaining adventure. I only hope that the rather lacklustre nature of some of the heroes involved doesn't adversely affect the sales of this module and thereby discourage TSR from producing anything similar.

Pete Tamlyn

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™: Secret Wars

OK comics fans, you can stop groaning now. You are quite right, but I have got something interesting to say so skip the next paragraph and read on.

What was that all about? Well, **Secret Wars** is a Marvel 'mini-series', a 12-issue set of comic books telling a single story. This particular series involves nearly all of the major heroes in the Marvel Universe and has a significant effect on many of their lives. In terms of comics sold the series has been a runaway success but, at least as far as fanzine critics go, the scripting has been condemned as irredeemably awful.

With 12 comic books to cover there is far too much in Secret Wars to compress into a standard scenario and so the series has been presented as a campaign background. Certain set encounters must occur during play, but random events are also used and GMs are encouraged to add material of their own as well. This in itself is a welcome innovation from TSR and something I have been trying to persuade games companies to publish for sometime. I only wish TSR could have found something better to try it on.

To start with, Secret Wars involves a possible 21 player characters which will be horribly unmanageable however you try to run it. Then again, those characters include the incredibly powerful Thor, Prof X and Magneto (yes, Magneto!) and the villains include the planet-eating Galactus and Doc Doom who gains god-like powers during the campaign. Mega-death isn't in it, whole universes can be destroyed. And there are no ordinary people involved at all. It makes just as bad an rpg as it made a comic.

Looking on the bright side, however, Secret Wars does provide the MSH GM with an interesting array of villains, including the charmingly blockheaded Wrecking Crew: a better bunch of slugfest fodder you couldn't hope to find anywhere. Also X-Men fans will want the module for the character stats for Cyclops.

Finally, however, a word of caution: I'm beginning to notice an annoying facet of these MSH products. For example, the powers listed for the FF in the **Murderworld** scenario are different to those given in the basic game. Equally Iron Man's stats are changed from those in **Avengers Assembled**. Most significantly of all, Prof X's Prime Requisites in Secret Wars have been changed from those in the X-Men scenario because the character has improved his abilities in the comic books since then. Prospective GMs should keep an eye open for this sort of thing lest confusion set in during play because the players are not all using the same source as you.

Pete Tamlyn

This game has been a long time in coming, but it is worth the wait. Some 3-4 years ago, two British roleplayers and comics fans, Simon Burley and Pete Haines, produced their own set of rpg rules for a Superhero game and, thinking them rather good, had them properly printed and tried to sell them. Quite a few copies got sold through fanzines and at conventions, but by no means as many as the game deserved. However, the good fairy, in the person of Games Workshop, took pity on these struggling game designers and agreed to produce the game professionally. The translation from amateur to professional product took many months and was not entirely trouble-free, but the finished product is now on the shelves and looking very stylish.

The character generation system is much as you would expect; a matter of rolling prime requisites and powers. What is interesting, however, is that having rolled his/her character the player is expected to 'rationalise' the resulting statistics. This involves producing an origin for the character explaining how the powers were gained and how they work.

Product information

MH4 - Lone Wolves, MH Special - Secret Wars (£2.95 each) and **CB1 - Conan the Barbarian** (£4.50) are TSR products, address on page 41

Golden Heroes (£8.95) is a Games Workshop product. 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10

007 - You Only Live Twice (£6.95) and **Live and Let Die** (£7.95) are from Victory Games, available from Avalon Hill, address p41

Addresses are given for information only; all products should be obtainable from your local games shop

AD&D®: Conan the Barbarian

Conan the Barbarian is such a widely known archetype for frp heroes that translating his world and character into an frp system seems a brave step and yet one that was bound to happen. David Cook has attempted to do this in a new TSR AD&D module.

A number of minor changes for standard AD&D rules are needed to cope with Conan and Hyboria. Clerics are banished, healing rates increased, and a 'fear check' introduced to cope with superstitious fear of magic. More interestingly, every player gets a certain number of luck points to spend in attempting feats outside the AD&D rules. These were good fun in the Conan context.

The material includes four pregenerated character sheets for Conan and friends. These are outside the normal run of AD&D characters, and the module rightly urges against bringing in existing characters.

The module itself also has some uniquely 'Conan' features. Normal AD&D monsters are almost totally replaced by various human opponents and potential opponents. Surprisingly, some of these are good enough to challenge Conan! The plot is simple and rather derivative, but takes in some interesting settings and encounters. For the most part it plays well, despite niggles like a ship that keeps changing its name, and monsters using

GOLDEN HEROES

Any of the rolled powers which cannot be sensibly incorporated into a coherent rationalisation are lost. Equally, no matter how good the story, if your rationalisation doesn't fit the rolled powers exactly it can't be used. This strikes me as a bit harsh and when I run the game I will allow the players a reasonable amount of leeway with regard to swopping powers in order to get to use the best origin stories and give them characters with whom they are happy.

Combat is controlled by a very elegant system which divides a round into four frames. Depending on initiative rolls and what has just happened in the fight, players may save a frame until after the opponent has had his/her action, or may 'borrow' frames from the next round in order to respond to an emergency (eg, borrowing a frame to grab a ledge after you've been pushed off a roof). I'm not convinced about the playability of other parts of the combat system; there seems to be altogether too much rolling of dice (eg 5d6 when it could be 1d6 + 14) and division of damage figures, to account for armour, where there could be subtraction, but the basic structure of the combat is very interesting indeed.

The most interesting facet of the game, however, is the Character Progression/Campaign system. Unlike most rpgs, characters do not progress much as a result of what they do during adventures. Rather, progression comes through practice (although practice time can be gained as a result of doing well in a scenario). But in addition to their powers, players in campaigns have a whole set of Campaign Ratings detailing how well they interact with the authorities, the public, their family, criminal contacts and so on. These ratings affect how the characters get on during adventures and, after an initial assessment based on the Rationale, are modified by the GM (annoyingly called the SS — Scenario Supervisor) depending on how the player plays the character. All sorts of effects are covered, from characters improving their Detective Points rating by clever use of clues found during play, to characters always getting picked on first by villains if their Personal Security rating has dropped to Paranoid. As well as being a means of regulating social interaction — the crowds boo you if your Public Status is low — it also regulates the players, depending on how they roleplay — your Public Status drops if you don't perform for the crowds. This is probably the best system for encouraging roleplay through the rules that is currently available, because while it is up to the GM to set the ratings, there is a very simple means of causing those ratings to affect the course of play.

No doubt you are wondering which I'm going to say is best between this and the TSR/Marvel game. Well, it depends what you want. MSH is neat, simple, and, if you read Marvel comics, comes complete with a well-documented, reasonably coherent campaign background. GH is much more complex and more detailed. For younger players, and if you just want the Superhero game for light relief and one-off scenarios, then MSH is the best, but if you are planning to run an extended Superhero campaign then Golden Heroes wins hands down.

Pete Tamlyn

007: You Only Live Twice

This scenario is intended for four 'Rookie' agents although suggestions are made on how to adapt it otherwise, the mission being an updated and altered version of the film plot. Contents include a briefing on Japanese society and culture which replaces the normal 'Thrilling Cities' feature. It is suggested that the GM stress the differences from the West — 007 is clearly a roleplaying game above all else. Hence the remarkable detail about the character and background of NPCs. More importance is attached to a series of locations than to a detailed description of a complex or base, as these are more suited to roleplaying and providing the opportunity for that integral part of a Bond adventure, the chase.

As usual Q branch provides some equipment for the players to use; in this case the famous Autogyro 'Little Nellie', a pen alarm and even a safecracking cigarette packet. The props continue to be excellent. They include imitation photographs, an article from the *Times*, and even a document with a bootmark where someone has stood on it. Again there are a number of detailed floorplans and area maps, grouped together in a removable section. The artwork is of a high standard. An interesting feature is a sketch and detailed performance table of a vehicle or weapon when it appears in the text.

Further helpful features include frequent hints on how to guide characters back onto the mission, particularly important when they are moving from location to location and clue to clue; and notes on how to aid them if they are wounded or their numbers depleted.

This scenario should provide entertainment for numerous role-playing sessions.

Nick Davison

007: Live and Let Die

The 'Tournament level' description on this game is somewhat misleading. There is no scoring system as with a 'Competition' dungeon; rather the adventure is tougher for the players to complete. It is stressed that this is not for beginners, and even experienced players with longstanding characters may need help. Interestingly the stakes of failure are not as drastic as usual, like world domination or partial destruction of the Earth. Perhaps the designers realised that there would indeed be a considerable number of failures.

Contents include details of New York and New Orleans, and a comprehensive booklet with area maps and building plans. Other useful additions are index cards for the major villains and 'hoods'. It is suggested that you put these in a card index after cutting them out or photocopying them. The latter is preferable to destroying the index on the opposite side of some. Contributions from Q branch are less spectacular than in **You Only Live Twice**: they consist entirely of watches. As usual the props are a welcome addition and this time include some Tarot cards and a page from an inflight magazine.

The artwork is excellent. I particularly liked that of some NPCs turning round from their tables in a hostile manner at the newly arrived agents.

Undoubtedly this is a lot tougher than previous scenarios. Players are not left to drift from location to location, but are continually confronted. Therefore they are worn down at each stage. The inclusion of the supernatural presents a formidable threat. Normally I disapprove of such an inclusion, but several events are unexplained in the film, such as Solitaire's powers of prediction. The GM is given an option to miss out magic and the alternative is reasonable. Well worth the extra money.

Nick Davison

their useless wings to fly into the attack.

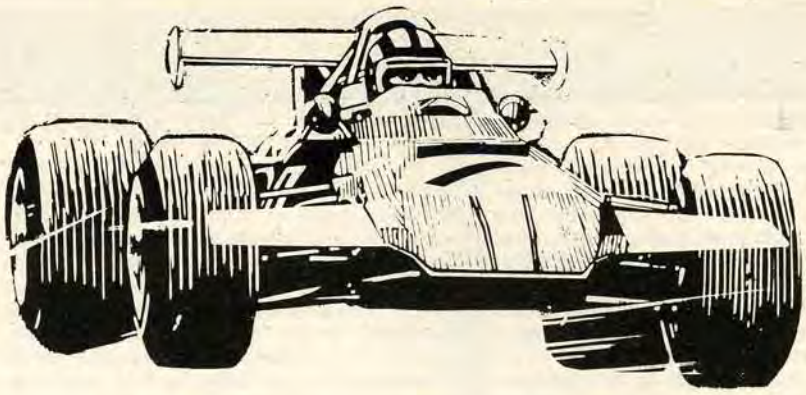
The mood of this module is different from the normal run of AD&D material, and the players and referee really need to get into the swing of the thing. It helps if one is familiar with the Conan books or films. This scenario is good for introducing the characters, but stronger plotlines will be needed if there is to be a series.

Steve Hampshire

Our bi-monthly feature about the postal gaming hobby

CHAIN MAIL

by Brian Creese



CHEQUERED FLAG

Who can resist it? Tension mounts as the engines race, their noise reaching screaming pitch, the smell of exhaust, the heat of the most powerful engines. They start, almost too slowly, before the entire pack hurtles towards the first corner where anything can happen. Yes, Grand Prix racing is, as all good FRPers will appreciate, predominantly about excitement and atmosphere — indeed, the travelling circus of motor racing could yet make a fine role-playing world.

A good boardgame based on the Grand Prix circuit must have several features; it should allow close-fought races with plenty of scope for both luck and skill, and it should keep the players concerned with the safety of their cars.

By far the most popular game of this type must be Waddington's **Formula One**. It scores very well on the first criterion, producing a very playable game from a simple concept. The track is divided into spaces, each representing 20mph; the faster you go, the more spaces you cover in a turn. There are safety speeds at each corner, and if you go above these speeds you must throw two dice to see whether you get away with it. Usually you cause 'wear' to be done to your car, though you may 'spin off' which slows you down without damaging the car. Serious gamers may quibble with the invulnerability of a driver who can deliberately drive off the track at 160mph and suffer no apparent damage, but as a gaming device it works well.

One of the problems with racing games, (in fact a problem of the races themselves) is the tendency for one player to get ahead and stay there, simply because no-one can actually get past. Formula One solves this problem with 'Tactic Cards', which you have at the start of the race and which allow drivers certain bonuses, such as going through bends faster or simply gaining several spaces. In this way the leader can suddenly find the car behind leaping ahead and blocking the route to a corner, just when victory had seemed certain.

So, a good game, and you are quite rightly expecting me to tell you that Formula One is a game played extensively by post. I am. In fact, it has a very long history of postal play and once even had a zine dedicated entirely to it. There are a few changes from normal play, but overall it does adapt very successfully. The major problem with playing Formula One by post is the time it takes to run a race. An average game of Diplomacy may take 16 turns or so, less than a quarter the length of a full Formula One race. Hence it is common for such games to include extra turns between issues, the result forwarded to players by photocopy, and for players to submit two moves per turn. Even so, a game of Formula One will probably take at least two years to complete, which can be a bit of a drag if you spun off at the first four bends you came to, and have seen nothing but the opposition's exhaust ever since! But in a hard, close-fought race, postal Formula One really can be an excellent game, with much scope for creative use of those all-important Tactic Cards.

As you may have guessed, I feel that Formula One falls down somewhat on the 'realism' factor. Much as I enjoy the game, both postally and face-to-face, this hurtling into corners at great speed does bother me. This is why I prefer Avalon Hill's **Speed Circuit**, which uses the same basic idea as Formula One with a track marked out into spaces which represent 20mph each, but goes far further towards being a simulation. Firstly, each player has several options for designing the car; it can have a high top speed, but little acceleration, or it may be capable of going quicker through corners at the expense of the decelerat-

GAME COMPANY

If you wish to find more members for your club, just write to this page for free publicity. Individuals seeking clubs in their area can advertise free too. First this month, some updates on recent advertisements.

The Ringwraiths of Chichester now meet in the Chichester Youth Wing, but other details remain the same — they meet on Fridays, 7.00 - 10.30pm. Contact Paul Barnetson, Chichester 527898, if you would like to join.

Northumbrian Adventurers Guild was formed after an advertisement in #20. Some meetings will be held in local pubs, others at **Blyth** Sports Centre, so members should be over 16 years old, though a 'junior section' will be formed if there is enough interest. Contact Mick McGovern on Blyth 360577 or Alisdair Barton, 366881.

Freedom Warriors of **Woodford Green** in Essex have raised their minimum age to 18, and ask for experienced players only — although again they are willing to start a subsidiary beginners group if required. At present they play on Wednesdays and Thursdays (different campaigns). Contact Angela Timms, 01-527 7176, evenings.

And now a new club to this pages – **Cumbernauld Barbarians Wargames Club** meets March 3rd then alternate Sundays at Westray Community Centre, Ravenswood in Strathclyde, to play historical figure wargames, **D&D, Traveller, MERP** and anything new. Contact Jim Ashman, 176 Beechwood Road, Cumbernauld; (02367) 33843.

Finally, a plea from a Yorkshire gamer: Dale Ashman, age 14, has been role-playing for four years, is capable of DM-ing, plays the **D&D®** game and **Warhammer** but will try anything, and is looking for a club in the **Ackworth** or **Pontefract** area of West Yorkshire. Phone Hemsworth 612846 any evening.

Forthcoming Events

GamesFair '85 will be at Reading University Friday to Sunday **29-31 March**. Special guest Gary Gygax, AD&D Open Championship and Team Competition, and all the games you could wish for. Non-residential tickets sold out at time of going to press, others going fast. If you already have your ticket, see you there!

Yorcon: **5-8 April** at Dragonara and Queens hotels, Leeds. GoH author Gregory Benford. Enquiries to Christine Donaldson, 46 Colwyn Road, Beeston, Leeds LS11 6PY.

ion. Once on the track, all speeds are shown simultaneously, and if you play with a stopwatch, this can mean real pressure as you desperately try to guess what everyone else is going to do. Finally, you can go faster through corners and throw some dice, just like Formula One, but now the chances are deadly, since there will always be the possibility of being out of the race. Dice-throwing in Speed Circuit can damage your health, and should definitely be reserved for the final bend. Races tend to be much closer and harder fought, but are also harder work, especially if played with a time limit. Indeed, it seems to me that this is a more natural postal game than Formula One, and it is surprisingly rarely offered. However, I am currently playing in such a game, and I am already convinced that the next few years will see many more postal SC games on offer.

I enjoy racing games greatly, particularly with skilled opponents, as they can require skill, luck and nerve to win. Both Formula One and Speed Circuit provide such conditions, and while they are better games played face-to-face where a tenser atmosphere can be created, they each make for an entertaining and light-hearted postal game. Oh, and don't forget the champagne on ice next time we play...

Brian Creese

Eurocon: in Eindhoven, **12-14 April**, will feature frp and wargames, Diplomacy championship, etc. For details write to Jan Feringa, Radijsstraat 11B, 9741 BJ Broningen, Netherlands.

Leicester Polytechnic (War)games Society has fixed provisional convention dates at **20-21 April**. For tabletop wargamers and role-players: if you are interested please write to The Treasurer, Leicester Polytechnic (War)games Society, Students Union, Leicester.

Sol III 85 will be at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool **3-6 May**. Guests Mark Lenard (Sarek) and SF authors James White and Lisa Tuttle. Fee £15 for weekend. Registration forms and details available from 39 Dersingham Avenue, Manor Park, London E12. Please enclose a SSAE.

DISPEL CONFUSION

Role-playing games have rules which are open to interpretation, and this sometimes causes problems when two gamers interpret things differently. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games; while the answers we give are not fully official we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience.

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9"x 4" SSAE.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. If a module or adventure uses the phrase 'save vs magic' does the designer mean 'save vs death magic' or 'save vs spells'? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. Some of the early TSR modules did contain this kind of ambiguity — and some other people's adventures still do. Saving throws against 'magic' should be read as saving throws vs spells, unless the context makes this unreasonable — a save to avoid the effects of a trap might be noted as a 'save vs magic', when it should obviously be a 'save vs death magic'.

STAR FRONTIERS® game

Q. What happens when a character with Medical skill fails a Diagnosis sub-skill roll?

A. The doctor simply trusts to luck and the stamina of the patient, and pumps in whatever drug he thinks is right! Oddly enough, the fact that a medic may not be able to make an exact diagnosis may actually help under certain conditions. If, for example, a character with Level 1 Medical skill is treating somebody with a high Stamina score it can prove much quicker and safer to treat someone in this general manner, rather than bother with a proper diagnosis (which may fail) and a proper use of a subskill (which again may fail).

Whether a character knows that he has failed a diagnosis is largely a matter of playing style and circumstances — even though the player may be well aware that things have gone wrong.

One solution to this problem is quite straightforward — the player is told that his character just doesn't know what is the matter. Another solution involves the thorny problem of character knowledge as opposed to player knowledge — are the players mature enough to separate character knowledge and player knowledge? The player knows that the dice roll was a total flop, but the character may believe that his diagnosis is completely accurate and ought to act on his beliefs, not the player's knowledge of true events, even if this does have detrimental effects overall.

This difference between character and player knowledge in all RPGs is one of the hardest points to convince players about. All of us are guilty of using information that — logically — should not be available to the character at some point, whether it is information from a sneaky dip in a **Monster Manual** or similar, or the result of a dice throw, as above.

Q. Can rocket packs and spacesuits be worn on planetary surfaces, and what effects does using a rocket pack on a planet have?

A. Yes, rocket packs and spacesuits can be worn on planetary surfaces — on planets with poisonous or otherwise malign atmospheres for instance. The major drawback of wearing suits is that they are not designed for use in gravity fields, only in weightless conditions. Unfortunately, the rules make no mention of the mass of such equipment, so the standard encumbrance rules cannot be applied.

We suggest that a character who chooses to wear a spacesuit complete with life support pack, rocket pack and (possibly) spacesuit armour suffers the penalties of being encumbered (**Alpha Dawn**, Expanded Rules p19), regardless of his or her Strength score. This should also apply to engineer's inssuits that are worn in a gravity field.

The effect of using a rocket pack on a planetary surface is much harder to judge, but as the acceleration due to using one in zero-g is given it is possible to work out what the rough effects should be. Ignoring all the tedious mucking about with a calculator, (and keeping the numbers neat and simple) the overall effect of having a space suit rocket pack actually switched on is to reduce the effective gravity of a planet by .2g. This would mean that a character using a rocket pack on a .6g planet would be treated as though on a .4g planet — he can leap further and jump higher and takes less damage from falling. This does not mean that the character can fly! However, a rocket pack only contains 20 bursts of fuel, sufficient for 20 turns — or 2 minutes!

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher & Graeme Morris

IT'S THE

BIFF ZAP POW

OF ROLE PLAYING GAMES
YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

CHAMPIONS

THE SUPER HERO ROLE PLAYING GAME

Like a breath of fresh air, the **CHAMPIONS** game system is bright and heroic in style, yet simple and complete in design. And a full list of adventures and supplements are already available, with more on the way.

- Rules you'll learn faster than a speeding bullet
- Adventures that smash through the imagination barrier
- Super Heroes dealing out death-defying justice
- Super villains to send tremors of fear through ordinary mortals

PRODUCTS IN THE **CHAMPIONS** *RANGE INCLUDE:*

* CHAMPIONS **£12.95**
* CHAMPIONS II **£6.95**
* ENEMIES I & II **£4.50 each**
* CHAMPIONS GM SCREEN **£3.95**
* ISLAND OF DR. DESTROYER **£3.95**
* ESCAPE FROM STRONGHOLD **£4.50**
* DEATH STROKE **£4.50**
* ADVENTURERS CLUB BOOK **£1.95**

BETTER WATCH OUT — YOU CAN'T BEAT **CHAMPIONS**

Prices quoted are the R.R.P.

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHOP, OR DIRECT FROM

CHRIS HARVEY GAMES

P.O. Box 100, Bath Street,
Walsall, W. Midlands.

CRASIMOFF'S WORLD

LARGEST PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME IN THE UK

A Play-By-Mail game with a D&D flavour'

'Undoubtedly, CRASIMOFF'S WORLD is a highly worthy game. It has been running for several years now and has a large number of players. Compared to others of its kind it is not expensive and it goes out of its way to encourage communication between players. I found the initial scenario interesting, and the world lived up to this promise. The fact that they are hand-written merely testifies to the immense amount of effort put in by the GM. So, with its regular newsletter, Crasimoff's World is a friendly, efficient and relatively cheap game to play, and if you wish to try a commercial PBM game with a distinctly D&D game-ish flavour, I would unhesitatingly recommend it.'

As reviewed in IMAGINE 18

Earth Wood

THE MAJOR US PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME

EARTHWOOD has been running for over 3 years in America and currently has over 2,000 players. KJC games has been granted the exclusive right to moderate this unique computer-moderated Play-By-Mail game in the UK. Twenty-five players compete all the cities of Earthwood and be the ultimate player. A typical game will last about 18 months with the first knockouts after six months.

Each player is either a king or a fantasy race or a powerful charismatic character in this world of conquest and sorcery. Your character or king controls several groups, each of which is totally independent of the others. You can recruit NPC trolls, wildmen and others into your service, or even control such powerful creatures as dragons or giant spiders. Your characters may also control or capture cities, upon which you can spend gold to improve security, increase your workshop's production, build defences and maintain or enlarge you army. With gold your wizards can undertake magical research to increase their power and knowledge and thus aid your armies in battle. Spies can search out enemy strongholds, attempt to do acts of sabotage, theft and assassination. These are just a few of the options available to a player in EARTHWOOD.

EARTHWOOD is completely computer-moderated, but the turn sheet and replies are written in plain English so that you can easily understand them. No need to look through complex charts and code books to understand this game.

If you wish to enrol in CRASIMOFF'S WORLD or EARTHWOOD, send a £5.00 cheque/PO payable to KJC Games. For this you will receive a rulebook, set-up material, the latest newsletter and the first three turns. Future turns are £1.50 each. Europeans may join only Crasimoff's World; rates as UK.

Return to:
KJC Games,
5 Vicarage Avenue,
Cleveleys, Blackpool,
LANCASHIRE FY5 2BD.

Please mention IMAGINE magazine when replying to advertisements

Fantasy Media

*Colin Greenland, author of **Daybreak on a Different Mountain** and co-editor of SF magazine **Interzone**, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Generally speaking, Hollywood versions are brighter and simpler than the books they're taken from. Not so **DUNE** (Universal, PG). David Lynch's fascinating film presents Frank Herbert's epic as a disturbing, fascistic delirium, a vast melodrama of oppressive destinies in which there's not room for a single attractive character. The breathy, stilted dialogue only adds to the decadent atmosphere. The violence is macabre and shocking; and so it should be. Anthony Masters' magnificent design features none of the gleaming chrome and sterile plastic we expect of space opera: instead, sinister paraphernalia of cast iron and coiled brass, corridors of dark wood and marble, and the sand, the endless sand...

CARAVAN OF COURAGE (Fox, U) is a tale of the Ewoks, the valiant teddy bears from **Return of the Jedi**. This time they help two spacewrecked kiddies — a poppet called Cindo and her obnoxious brother Mace — to rescue their parents from a hairy bat-eared ogre called Gorax. The ogre's okay. The rest is a casual catalogue of magical folderol about various ancestral talismans carried by the questing koalas. It certainly did the trick for the eight- and nine-year-olds in the front row, but seemed to make little sense to their mums and dads, or to me.

More furry friends in Joe Dante's **GREMLINS** (Warner, 15). The winsome little Mogwai multiply and mutate into vicious reptilian goblins if you don't treat them right, which Billy Peltzer (Zach Galligan) promptly doesn't, or else there wouldn't be a story. Actually there isn't much of a story anyway, merely spiralling mayhem as the creatures trash homely Kingston Falls. Two or three good jokes, three or four neat scenes, lots of detail, but overall a manic melee of pyrotechnics that made random grabs for my sympathy and failed to hold my attention. A bit more coherent thought, and who knows, it might have been something good.

Question: What makes a **BLACK HOLE** yawn? Answer: Walt Disney's space-buster of that title, distributed on video by Rank. With Maximilian Schell as Dr Hans Reinhart, the perverted genius who keeps his ship hovering on the event horizon, it's more like **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea in Space**, if you follow me. Reinhart's self-imposed mission: *'To go to another place and another time where, if we're lucky, we have the possibility to find what we call the ultimate knowledge.'* Even more awesome than the special effects is the stupidity of the script; and the cute robots will have you reaching for a tin-opener.

FEVERHOUSE is an unconventional video from Ikon FCL, a grim story filtered and fragmented through the preoccupations of its characters: a gloating thief, a dissident nurse and a blind archivist. Stark images of bones, old medical apparatus and dogs running in the corridors repeat while, among wind and skeletal music, voices speak of broken things. Is the Feverhouse a prison, a lunatic asylum, or a state of mind? Enigmatic, abstract and intense.

THE WAR OF POWERS and **ISTU AWAKENED** (New English Library, £2.95 each) add up to nearly a thousand pages of heroic pulp from Robert E Vardeman and Victor Milan. A virile adventurer aids a voluptuous princess to save the Sundered Realm from the Dark Ones, pursued by her evil relatives and alternately helped and hindered by miscellaneous amulets, elementals and bottled genies. 'Realistic, adult and funny' said **Science Fiction Review**, but three different adjectives spring to my mind: crude, sleazy and crass.

Virtually all fantasy adventures take place in an imaginary world. **MAGICIAN**, first volume of Raymond E Feist's Riftwar Saga, introduces two: the Tolkienish Midkemia with its kingdoms and free cities, dwarves in the mines and elves in the wood, and the rigid, feudal Kelewan, which invades Midkemia through a space warp, to plunder its metal. **Dragon**, the US D&D® magazine, reckoned this 'the best new fantasy concept in years,' which shows how convention-bound the genre has become, I suppose. Perhaps the reviewer was biased because Feist spends the rest of his time designing fantasy role-playing game supplements. There isn't really anything original about **Magician**. It relies heavily on generalized characters and landscapes; but after a slow start Feist gets everything in perspective, emphasizing the distances and difficulties of stopping this war nobody really wanted to start.

Colin Greenland

The IMAGINE™ magazine

READERS SURVEY

Apologies to all you fans of the letters page; normal service will be resumed next month. This month, as you can see, we have quite a few comments of a different nature; namely, the results of the Poll, published in issue 21.

236 readers returned their Poll forms, an excellent return. The results of their votes, as published below, are printed according to the following format: category; %votes in 'like' column/%votes in 'dislike' column; selected comments.

IMAGINE Readers Roll More 20s badges are on the way to all voters, and three in particular will be receiving bumper parcels, containing the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES™** game boxed set and a module or two. Congratulations to Andrew Lorenz, Easton-in-Gordano, Avon; Oliver Gunaskari, Sevenoaks, Kent; and A Davey, St Clement, Jersey.

On with the results!

Scenarios, D&D; 58/8
Scenarios, AD&D; 74/4
Scenarios, SF; 33/23
Scenarios, other systems; 38/18
Scenarios, multi-system; 58/14
Nothing surprising there, with the **AD&D®** game the clear favourite, and much smaller support for SF and other rpgs. Few votes were cast against any of these categories, with most of those who commented that they only played one of the **D&D®** games not actually giving a 'dislike' vote to SF and other games.

The relationship of the two varieties of the D&D game produced some interesting comments. D&D scenarios 'give ideas for AD&D' (Iain Mathieson), and are 'good if they can also be used for AD&D' (Mark Lewis) according to one school of thought. On the other hand 'Let's have more!' (Anthony Sweeney), 'Have a few more for all D&D players' (David Radford), 'D&D is not very well catered for' (Paul Emsley), were typical pro-D&D comments. We'll be making more of an effort to ensure that scenarios are playable for both systems. A few made the comment too that scenarios should be of a lower level generally, and we appreciate this point too.

SF scenarios did not excite a very high proportion of voters one way or the other. 'Generally of high quality, but not much use if you don't play SF games' (Jeremy Barnes). There was a greater request for more material for the **STARFRONTIERS®** game as opposed to **Traveller**. Again, dual stats might be the answer. A few felt 'they waste space in a D&D magazine' (Andrew Baverstock), but generally people were tolerant of SF material; 'I suppose SFrpgers are people too' (Dave Haldenby).

Looking at scenarios for other systems, there were those who felt 'as a player and GM in many games it is nice to see a variation in scenarios' (Malcolm Parkin), and that 'other systems add a wider range of reader' (Iain May), and even those who 'don't play these systems myself, but like to see them catered for' (Captain Dettol). **RQ** was the most requested system, but only one in twenty requested that. Our most successful foray into other systems seems to have been with issue 13; 'although I don't play **Call of Cthulhu**, I found this very interesting' (Simon Curtis).

Many voters wanted to see some of the other systems covered by the use of multi-system scenarios. 'Why don't you go systemless?' (Peter Blanchard) asked, others 'would prefer systemless scenarios' (Keith White). Some argued that they were 'too long for their own good' (J Wallis), or that they were OK 'so long as you convert odd happenings/new monsters' (G Roberts). Favourite scenarios among the voters were *Sinvel's Peril*, *Round the Bend*, *Jack of All Trades*, *Darklaw*, *For Whom The Bell Jingles*, *Fire Opal of Set*, *Necklace of Lilith*, *Guardian of the Key To Time* and *Black Roses*.

Brief Encounters (new gaming 'hardware'); 64/8
An attractive idea to many gamers. 'Easy to fit into a campaign' (R Vallat), 'useful fill-ins during long journeys' (David Stone), and individual items like the *Marsh Dragon* scored highly. 'I enjoyed this one especially — fits in perfectly' (Nicholas Mir). People are still looking for more spells, magic items and monsters it seems, but we should 'avoid **Fiend Factory**-type mistakes, it goes on forever' (Danny Child).

Articles, rules expansion; 66/8
Articles, discursive gaming; 78/6
Articles, historic/background; 50/14
Articles, general; 30/15
Most people want their reading firmly rooted in gaming, it seems, although not necessarily just endless development of the rules. The expansion of the cleric's role was greatly enjoyed; 'the best yet' (Haydn Burgess), 'do one on thieves and MUs' (C-S Mangat). Some are 'using existing rules' (Dave Hetherington), others feel 'too many readers won't accept them as them as "think" pieces and would wish to argue'. *Clerics Are People Too*, *The Private Lives Of NPCs*, *Looking For An Edge*, *What To Do With A Dragon's Treasure* and the articles on *Celts* and *Druids* all scored highly. Whilst 'some things you just can't change' (Ben Campton), most readers do seem to want more overhauling of rpgs in **IMAGINE™** magazine.

The 'real world' settings and background articles were not so popular. 'History intrudes on fantasy' (T Knott); 'some people may find this interesting, but I find it boring' (Daniel Sumption). The middle ground 'only like them with concrete rpg adaptation tips' (Benedict Wolf), or felt they 'need improvement in the way they are written and presented' (Jonathan Roper). But there are those who thought they were 'excellent' (C J Fardon), and that 'this sort

Back Issues

Back copies of IMAGINE™ magazine are still available direct from the publisher. Is your collection complete?

1 Introductory scenario; figure painting •
3 AD&D scenario; Dave Langford fiction
4 STAR FRONTIERS® game scenario; Anne McCaffrey fiction
5 CELTIC SPECIAL: new druid spells, Celtic mythology.
6 Acrobat class; multi-system scenario; Ian Watson fiction
7 The DRAGONQUEST® game: introduction and scenario
8 Cantrips; Sorceror's Apprentice
9 0-level MU scenario; Cantrips, boardgame
10 Phantasmal Forces; AD&D scenario
11 Cavalier; Horse Combat; Private Lives of NPCs •
12 Solo adventure; Terrain/Climate; Brief Encounter; Enchantment
15 GamesFair '84 Special; Marsh Dragon •
16 EGYPT SPECIAL: mythology, magic, scenario; PELINORE
17 CELTIC SPECIAL II: mythology, scenario; Drow •
18 SF features; Creating Monsters; Games Without Frontiers •
19 Companion Set scenario; Golems; Private Lives of NPCs II
20 CLERICS Special: New spells, new weapons, alignment.
21 MARVEL SUPERHEROES™ game; grow-your-own monsters.
22 MICHAEL MOORCOCK special: fiction, scenario, interview; Vampires; Solo Gamebooks
23 Ghosts; Languages; Multi-character game; Board wargaming; Pelinore overview

£1.00 each, plus 50p P&P per order (UK price only).

• Stocks running low, please order now to avoid disappointment

of thing should definitely appear in the magazine' (Rachel Shaw).

Apart from advertising, general articles attracted fewer votes, positive or negative than any other category. Not many felt thay wanted 'some more like this' (Edward Seward), or that we should 'keep the intellectuals in your pay' (Jenn). Generally, it was felt that these were not 'useful for experienced DMs' (Paul Bratcher), and that 'they have no actual use in gaming' (Colin Lusk).

Pelinore; 77/7
The second most popular category, and many said it was their favourite feature. The most frequent complaint was that it just wasn't happening fast enough. 'How many millions of issues will pass before it's finished?' (Jeremy Barnes); 'it should be printed in longer chunks' (Paul Baker); 'put more in less issues' (Simon Donald). We'll certainly have to pick up on production, even if it upsets those few who find in 'stultifying' (Lloyd Lewis). Another suggestion was that we 'put too much detail in the characters — the maps are better' (Dominic Reynolds), that it needs 'more description of locations' (Nick Grande). Much of the rest was just variations of great, fantastic, mega-brill and excellent — with *The Arena* and *Law And Order* as particular favourites.

Stirge Corner; 72/7
Roger Musson's series 'gives useful hints and tips' (Andrew Baverstock) and is a 'great help' (Simon Gilbertson). The general consensus was that it is 'the best discussion page' (M Crouch). Naturally, Roger will continue his series for the forseeable future.

Chain Mail; 23/31
Not a winner. Most negative voters just had no interest in postal play. 'I don't like play-by-mail' (Michael Galer); 'not a pbm fan' (Nicholas Munn). Those who are involved in this part of the hobby felt it to be 'quite useful' (Paul Evans) and one at least was trying out pbm 'because of *Chain Mail*' (Duncan Harris). But, we can take a hint, and we'll explore new ways of covering postal gaming as the year progresses.

Illuminations; 36/30
This was mildly surprising to us, although we were aware that the difficulties we have experienced in obtaining interesting news items in a largely American-dominated industry have devalued this space. 'Slightly biased to TSR' (Paul Evans), said some. Others 'prefer full reviews' (J Wallis). Those who found it 'witty, interesting and informative' (Tim Ellis) or thought it 'nice to see a gamer's news service' (Gordon Allan) were in a slight majority.

Notices (reviews); 71/6
'Takes up too much room' (David Stone), but otherwise pretty popular. 'Doug Cowie should do all of them' (Lee Peleteiro) — which offers some consolation for the news about *Illuminations*. One idea, expressed a few times, was that we should 'give the articles a rating' (Nicholas Mir). Most comments agreed that the reviews 'make you think twice before buying things', which can't be bad, and some preferred this space for learning about what is going on — perhaps a pointer to the future.

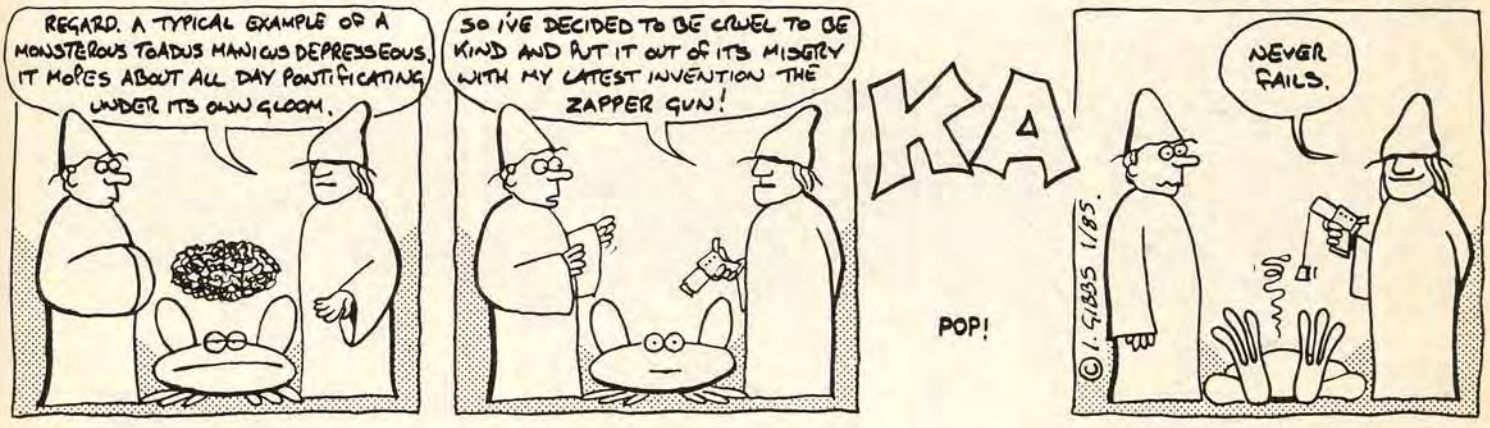
Press Cuttings; 31/31
A similar response to that for *Chain Mail*, depending heavily on the individual reader's familiarity with the genre. Many people don't read this section, or find it boring because they 'never read them' (Ben Campion). 'The one about designing a fanzine was good' (Mark Lewis), but not enough readers have been tempted to try fanzines out. We'll be looking at how we can revamp this coverage in the course of the next few months.

Media Reviews; 33/22
Not exciting too many people one way or the other. Most negative votes fell into the 'not for a D&D mag' (A Hunt) category, or felt that there were specialist mags already '**Starburst** is much better' (Simon Johnson). On the positive side, *Fantasy Media* 'adds another dimension to the magazine' (Nick Grande). Lots of specific criticisms and suggestions for improvement were made. 'It should be more informal' (M Woods); 'It's much too late in print' (Dominic Reynolds); 'I don't see why film reviews should come into it' (Rachel Shaw); 'Books interesting, others not' (Jonathan Roper); 'A monthly book review and the occasional film review would be an improvement' (Paul Emsley); 'Longer reviews of individual books/films' (Anthony

continued overleaf

VOP

by Ian Gibbs


REGARD. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF A MONSTEROUS TOADUS MANICUS DEPRESSEOUS. IT MOPES ABOUT ALL DAY PONTIFICATING UNDER ITS OWN GLOOM.
SO I'VE DECIDED TO BE CRUEL TO BE KIND AND PUT IT OUT OF ITS MISERY WITH MY LATEST INVENTION THE ZAPPER GUN!
KA
POP!
NEVER FAILS.
©I.GIBBS 1/85.

Next Issue

THE FAR EAST

Ideas for frp play based on the cultures of the Orient

*including a scenario for the **BUSHIDO** and **AD&D** games:*

The Words of Go-guji

#25: £1

Sweeney). One extremely deserved vote of confidence: 'Colin Greenland is superb' (D Mortimer).

Fiction; 59/13
Votes right across the board for individual stories, with *The Case Of The Purple Potion* out in front. 'The humorous stories are best' (Richard Sutherland). A few saw them as giving 'good ideas for scenarios' (Paul Edwards), 'very good for adventure ideas' (G Silsbury). 'How about a longer piece, serialised', (Andrew Doyle) was one suggestion.

Competitions; 56/7
Point taken. We'll be running more of these in the future, even some 'with fantastic prizes!!' (Tessa du Croz). Lots of people liked *The Philosopher's Stone*, and we'll have to try something like that again, 'made easy for wallies like me' (Barry Seymour).

Cartoons; 71/11
Very popular, though not everyone's cup of tea. 'Fun, but too many' (J Wallis); 'They're worse than Thrud & Co' (G Roberts). The big favourite, even though not currently in the magazine, was *The Sword Of Alabron*. 'Bring back Auchter' (Gordon Allan), 'Bring back Auchter' (Andrew Horton), 'Bring back Auchter' (Scott McNair), 'Bring back Auchter' (Robert Tindale), etc. In terms of expressed loves/hates, Alabron won 64-1, VOP won 28-6, Phalanx won 22-6 and Rubic lost 7-19....

Dialog; 33/28
The least popular 'personality' column. Not a lot was said in praise of it, and I can't repeat some of what was said of a less flattering nature. A lot of anti-American feeling out there, isn't there?

IMAGINE readers roll more 20s

Turnbull Talking; 39/22
'Thoughtful & almost always interesting' (P Jeffrey) sums up the response, although a few did go to extremes. 'I like the quiz things' (Jacky Britton), said a few who weren't so keen on the rest of it, but others would 'forget the awful puzzles' (Simon Johnson).

Dispel Confusion; 71/8
We humbly apologise for those issues in which we missed *DC*. 'Stops arguments' (Dominic Reynolds), 'a useful service' (Rachel Shaw), 'don't drop it or else!' (Anthony Sweeney). *DC* will be expanded in some issues, so keep those questions coming in!

Letters; 68/4
Very, very few people actually dislike seeing letters in print. 'A must — feedback is essential' (Dave Haldenby); 'useful for mixed points of view' (G Silsbury); 'amusing' (I McGrady). Some of you were biased of course: 'Thank you for printing mine' (Valentin Barrios) and some of you thought we were biased; 'Never anyone from my area!' (Cathal Woods). 'I'm gonna write one!' (C Lam) — tune in next month to see if he does.

Forthcoming Events/Clubs; 37/21
'Nice to be able to keep in touch with other rpgers' (Malcolm Parkin), and a generally appreciated service.

Advertising; 31/11
Not as unpopular as some think, although — unsurprisingly — the subject drawing least comment. 'Good if it keeps down the cover price' (S Goodwin) and 'I think ads should be left out' (Michael Galer) covers the spectrum.

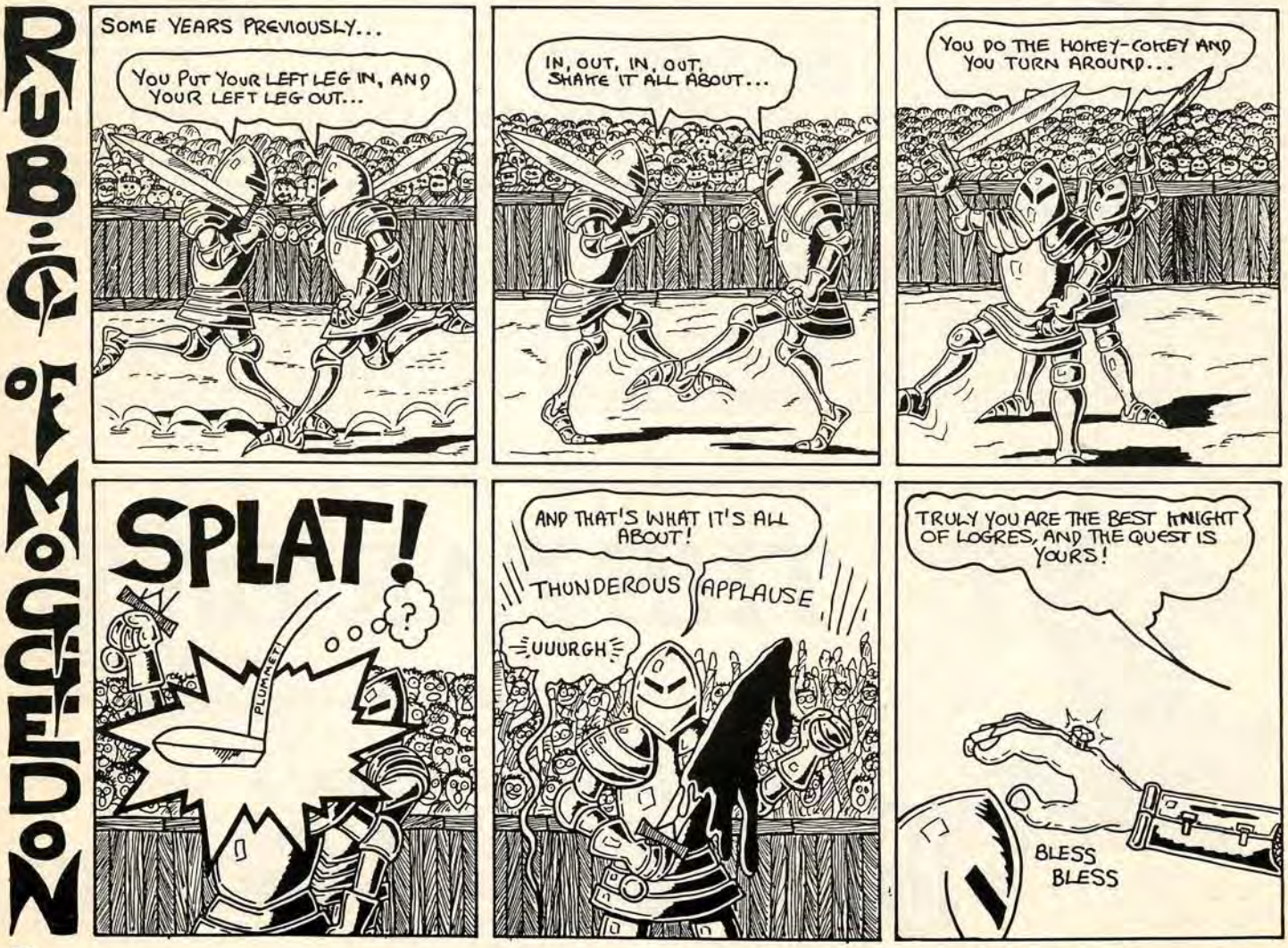
Tavern Talk; 42/22
Not a favourite at the time — 'why not just visit a pub?' (James Fellowes) — now there is a 'bring it back' (Neil Marsden) vote. How do people feel about *Soapbox*, now?

Beginners' Guide; 26/34
Not the most unpopular thing we've ever done. 'Awful, but necessary' (Duncan Harris) some said. 'Let it never darken our hovels again' (C Wagstaffe) said others.

Imagination Machine; 13/58
Ouch! Looks like we're well off without micro coverage. 'A complete waste of space' (Gordon Allan); 'it has nothing to do with rpgs' (R Vallat); 'better to buy a computer magazine' (David Stone). A few voices cried for DM Aid programmes, but it looks as if the 'nays' have it.

So, there it is. Our thanks to all who took part, now to be seen everywhere with shiny blue and white badges. We hope we've learned something from this exercise, and you should notice a few changes as the months go by, to keep **IMAGINE** magazine as fresh and responsive to your needs as ever.

Results processed by Kim Daniel
Comments compiled by Paul Cockburn


SOME YEARS PREVIOUSLY...
YOU PUT YOUR LEFT LEG IN, AND YOUR LEFT LEG OUT...
IN, OUT, IN, OUT, SHAKE IT ALL ABOUT...
YOU DO THE HOKEY-COKEY AND YOU TURN AROUND...
SPLAT!
PLUMMET!
AND THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!
THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE
UUURGH!
TRULY YOU ARE THE BEST KNIGHT OF LOGRES, AND THE QUEST IS YOURS!
BLESS BLESS

Wildernesses conceal ferocious monsters of all levels, and can frighten parties with enough fighting power to knock most fantasy heroes out cold!

A page for the not-so-experienced adventurer

by Roger Musson

One thing that players soon discover when making a wilderness adventure for the first time is that wildernesses can be very dangerous. The average dungeon always has its relatively harmless upper levels — its nursery slopes, as it were. But once you go forth into the uncharted countryside, you find yourself pitching in with all sorts of nasty things — dragons and other monsters which in any respectable dungeon would be consigned to the deeps; huge hordes of orcs that outnumber the party twenty to one, and much more besides.

The effect of this discovery can often put players off wildernesses for good, or until they reach very high levels at any rate. I have heard players with characters of quite high rank complaining 'We're not strong enough for a wilderness trip,' when the amount of fighting power they actually possessed would have knocked most fantasy heroes of literature out cold.

This does not seem at all desirable to me. First, if a campaign is going to be a credible reflection of conventional fantasy literature, then it ought to be reasonably possible for weak parties to venture safely across country, given careful play and no particularly bad luck. Second, it seems distinctly odd to me that the dungeon/labyrinth, the lair of evil beasts, the mysterious underground etc, should actually be safer to explore than the average stretch of uninhabited countryside. Third, from the point of view of the quality of gaming, if players are afraid to venture away from a single spot because of the dangers of the wilderness, a lot of variety is lost.

The problem is twofold: (a) wilderness encounters are not graded by monster level in the same way as underground encounters, so a low-level party can meet monsters just as ferocious as those faced by a bunch of lords and wizards; and (b) numbers appearing in the wilderness are generally larger than those underground. When running a wilderness adventure, it is therefore advisable to keep these things in mind unless you really want to dissuade players from making wilderness expeditions.

There are a number of possible remedies. The first is to provide characters with the means to get themselves through the hazards of the wilderness — more or less. Since the wilderness is a very dangerous place, the ordinary inhabitants who wish to travel anywhere can do so by organising a large caravan, there being safety in numbers, and this caravan will usually include a few high-level NPCs for good measure. Thus if player characters wish to get from A to B, they have to join a caravan. The sequence of any particular gaming session seems to be: (1) characters join caravan; (2) caravan travels one day's journey and then camps for the night; (3) during the night, the camp is assailed by huge numbers of orcs, leading to an enormous melee taking hours to resolve; (4) the party then stops at the next village to recover from wounds, which takes several months; (5) repeat sections 1-4 ad libitum. Personally, I find this an unsatisfactory approach. Most of one's playing time is spent fighting these huge encounters, and one very rarely actually gets to one's destination.

The second approach is to temper the wind to the shorn lamb, as the saying goes. This is to build into wilderness encounters the same sort of safeguards that restrict underground encounters, as the encounters happen. Suppose a weak party is travelling, and you roll up an encounter with orcs. Instead of throwing in 30-300 of the things, restrict yourself to 1-10, or whatever number they can reasonably handle. On the other hand, if you roll up a dragon, instead of checking for range of encounter, surprise, etc as normal, make quite sure that either the characters see the dragon first or the dragon doesn't see the characters at all. It will serve to give the players a scare, which is all that's needed.

Alternatively, it's not a bad idea to dream up all your encounters in advance, suitable in strength to the party in question, and write them on pieces of card. Thus you might have things like i) three bugbears; ii) a small party of lost pilgrims looking for a shrine; iii) a wyvern flies overhead without noticing the party; and so on. Each of these can be worked out in some detail, including hit points, weapons carried, names if applicable, treasure carried, and anything else appropriate. Then, when it's time for an encounter — pick a card, any card...

The last alternative to bear in mind is to design your wilderness in levels analagous to those of a dungeon. Thus one area might be a sort of 'first level' wilderness with relatively harmless monsters, while other areas progressively more remote from the player characters' homes will have more aggressive monster populations. This does, of course, mean drawing up a separate encounter table for each area. You then have to worry about how the players are going to tell which area is which. Basically, there are three ways. First, trial and error. If the characters blunder into a dangerous area, they'll know about it when fifteen weretigers leap out at them. The players' next characters will know to avoid the place! Second, you can make it a matter of lore. If the characters make the right enquiries, they will learn that 'no wise man do venture into the land of Grond, arr Jim lad...'. Third, you can make changes in 'level' equivalent to changes in terrain. Thus, if the characters travel through scrub and find a marsh ahead, they can bank on the marsh being a more dangerous place. And if they find a wild forest beyond the marsh, that too will be more dangerous. I have experimented with this idea in a campaign set in a forest, where the different 'levels' are reflected in changes in tree type.

Much the same caution applies to waterborne adventuring. I would suggest that you refrain from throwing plesiosaurs at any boat the party takes, unless the characters are powerful enough to deal with such things. Otherwise, the party will be so afraid to travel anywhere that you will be stuck with routine dungeon-bashing adventures in the same place for longer than you like.

Roger Musson

*Previous **Stirge Corner** themes are detailed below. To obtain back issues see p48.*

#1 & 3: Introduction to rpgs; #4-5: Beginner DMs; #6-7: Staying alive; #8: Treasure*; #9: Monsters*; #10: Treasure & monsters*; #11: Time & motion*; #12: Role-playing; #15: Mapping*; #16: Scale; miniature figures; #17: DM-ing equipment*; #18-21: Alignments; #22: Languages; #23: Wildernesses*

**mainly for DMs.*

Please note that #2, 13 & 14 are out of print.

PRESS CUTTINGS

It is heartening to see that there are still new zines appearing on the scene each month, and that they aren't sticking to the older, more established games for their material. In fact, all the frp zines seem to be branching out nowadays, in an effort to cover more than just the **AD&D®**, **RuneQuest** and **Traveller** games, which have been the steady zine diet.

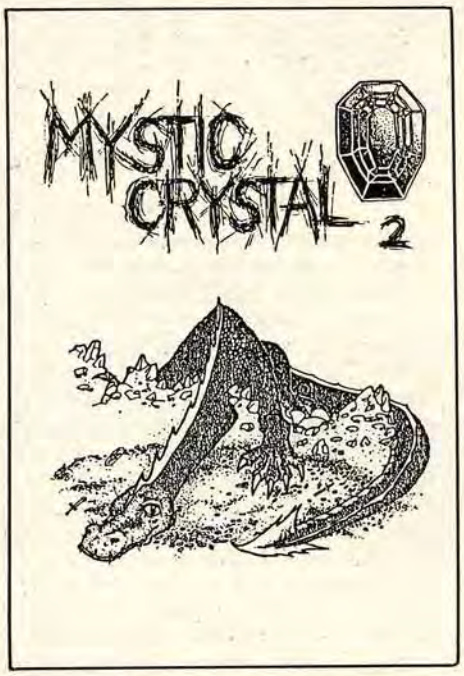
With the massive price-rise in **RQ**, and the subsequent loss of players this will bring about, **Call of Cthulhu** looks set to become the favourite game (after AD&D, of course). This is borne out by zines such as **MANIC DEPRESSIVE**, which has just produced its first issue. Nick says he wants to cover any, or all, rpgs; and provides articles on AD&D, a large scenario and a useful checklist of ancient tomes for **CoC**. Manic Depressive also exhibits one of the other trends to appear in frp zines recently — a fascination with **Dr Who** fandom. There is a thriving community of Dr Who fanzines and fans, and more and more games fans seem to be involved in this area. Perhaps it is because of the new, proposed Dr Who role-playing game? MD also carries a very comprehensive section of 'zine reviews, which covers each magazine in more depth than I can here.

PROTOPLASM is another new fanzine, though not up to the standard of Manic Depressive. There is a very short Cthulhu page, a multi-system scenario and a few reviews. Those are the better aspects of the contents; I, for one, would question the taste of a scenario based on the SAS raid of the Iranian Embassy. The humorous content is pretty poor: an 'interview' with Gary Gygax and a terrible cartoon strip.

DEAD ELF 2 is also very recent, and again carries a fairly large and well-written Call of Cthulhu scenario, as well as an RQ scenario and various reviews and letters. Andrew is obviously still feeling his way around publishing a zine and is still having some problems with the layout and content. But DE2 is very readable, even contentious in places! and there's no reason why it shouldn't improve rapidly.

The fanzine for Call of Cthulhu is **DAGON**, of course, as it is devoted to just this one rpg. Issue 5 is now available, and Carl hopes to make the magazine bi-monthly from now on. There is 'The Disappearance of Dr Benwell', a full-length scenario, with player hand-out and comprehensive maps; Marcus L Rowland on psychiatric treatment in CoC (always useful!) and other background material. As always, a must if you play Call of Cthulhu.

It isn't just CoC which is getting coverage nowadays; anyone remember that game **Man, Myth and Magic**? Well, **THE FIERY CROSS** 2 actually has a full-length scenario for the game, just about the first I've seen in any magazine. There is also the usual AD&D scenario (well, two of them actually), and a **Warhammer** scenario. Plus, they now have photo-reduced text, so you get twice as much content for only fivepence more, which can't be bad. **MYSTIC CRYSTAL** have had problems getting their second issue out, with their printer going bust and keeping the originals! Still, it is finally here, and apart from AD&D and **Champions**, it has the first articles I've seen on **Ringworld**, with a design for a Gyrocycle. **DEMONS DRAWL** 9 continues to offer good support for the traditional rpgs, plus plenty of chat, and even manages to squeeze in a mini-scenario for that rarely mentioned rpg **Chivalry & Sorcery**. People will be producing articles on **Bunnies & Burrows** next!



IMAZINE 8, still with the same title, doesn't cover any more obscure rpgs, although Paul has probably written more reviews of Chivalry & Sorcery than anyone else alive, but it does have a very odd AD&D scenario, 'The Purple Poignard' (da da da dah!) which is more a joke than a serious scenario to be run, but makes extremely funny reading anyway! Imazine is also very involved with Dr Who fandom, perhaps more than most, with a regular column on the subject, as well as a letters column devoted to discussing how to design a Dr Who game. It all makes fascinating reading.

THE GUILDER 4 is the last issue of that fanzine, and is replaced by **NOW EAT THE RABBIT** from William Whyte, a bit scruffy, but plenty on Dr Who, and a new game in each issue. **OBSCURITY INC** 3 has mainly humorous pieces, such as Star Trudge III script, and a joke cult. It might appeal to some people, but didn't really to me.

CEREBRO, the X-Men Fanclub Newsletter, has a new issue out, which celebrates 100 issues of the X-Men written by Chris Claremont, and features lots of information and discussion about the X-Men comic and related characters. There is even a discussion of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® role-playing game by Pete Tamlyn, and how the X-Men match up in it. If you are interested in comics, but cannot stand all the characters who walk around in multi-coloured longjohns, then you'll probably find **INFINITY** worth a look. This is a comics fanzine which refuses to devote any space to Superheroes in any form, and thus concentrates on everything from Raymond Briggs to Posy Simmonds to the more experimental end of the medium. The magazine sometimes comes across as a little pretentious, carried away with the ideal of

comics as the new art form, but it does have a lot of very interesting material. Worth looking at to see what you've been missing while reading Spidey and his Super-Friends all these years.

LANKHMAR STAR DAILY 12 is a special Saturnalia issue, and Rob goes totally over the top by producing a 72-page issue! The first half is the standard magazine, which includes plenty of letters, film reviews and music, and a long (12 page) systemless scenario for all rpgs, which looks very well worked out, and is eminently readable as well as playable. The second half of the zine contains the game reports, write-ups and information on Rob's postal **2112** frp campaign. The amount of effort Rob puts into the thing must be immense! There is also a series on designing and running postal games, very useful if you are thinking of trying your own, one on psychology of rpgs, and several games of **Diplomacy**. Phew! Fairly expensive, but worth every penny!

PRISONERS OF WAR is the new name for **Psychopath**, now that Wallace Nicoll and Doug Rowling have taken the zine over from Mike Dean. The first, trial, issue is really just intended as an introduction to the new editors' plans for the magazine, and as an introduction to them. However, it does contain all the games Psychopath used to run, as well as a new subzine and more. Certainly, the new editors look very capable of continuing with the same high standard Mike had set for the zine.

VIENNA is a new zine to me, and already up to issue 5. Richard describes it as a gameszine, which attempts to run a lot of Diplomacy, **Railway Rivals, Cluedo**, etc. This the magazine seems to do very efficiently, and they try to include a new variant with rules and map each issue. This time it is the turn of **World Domination**, a Diplomacy variant created by Richard, which comes complete with an A3 copy of the map. The zine also contains some reviews, letters and strategy articles.

GREATEST HITS is, of course, very old, and the latest issue actually marks 10 years of publishing! While Pete has always run games of Diplomacy etc, he has always tried to make the zine enjoyable to read, and has succeeded admirably. **TWIQU** is another very readable zine, produced by Graham Staplehurst, and rather elitist in that it appears to be distributed as a trade only, or on Graham's whim. It always has plenty on games and general chat though, and is well worth getting if you can trade.

And finally a quick run through the other zines received, which include: the T&T loving **TTYF** with **En Garde** and **Crimson and Gold Arena** games still on offer; **SWANSEA WITH ME**, hiding behind a Mal Dean cover, and still writing about Postal **Spanish Maine**; **CUT & THRUST** 31, which looks back over the year and offers a marvellously efficient game of En Garde! **BARBAROUS LEAGUE** 8 offers **United** and a new Boxing game; **JAWZ** 3 which has Rather Silly Seismic Railway Rivals and **Illuminati** starting; **HOPSCOTCH** 47 with plenty of games running; **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, the essential news sheet; a rather slimmed-down **NMR!** 56; and **MAD POLICY** 103. The latest **BSFA** mailing brings us a wide variety of SF magazines, and news of some very exciting plans for 1985 for the expansion of the BSFA. **WARGAME NEWS** covers Woad to Wuin (honest!), plus Trial of the Fox, Stars & Bars and Power & Resolution. Very useful if you are a boardgaming freak.

Finally, if you do write to one of the zines mentioned here for more details, please enclose a SSAE for their reply. Most zines lose enough money without any extra burden! Thanks.

Mike Lewis

Contact Addresses

BARBAROUS LEAGUE, Paul de la Pena, 7 Hulton Close, Brunton Park, Harton, Cleveland TS7 8PG (?); **BSFA**, Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Lanarkshire G72 9NA (£7 per year); **CEREBRO**, G F Wilmetts, 74 Gloucester Rd, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 6EA (£4.50 for 6); **CUT & THRUST**, Derek Wilson, 321 Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 4SE (55p); **DAGON**, Carl Ford, 11 Warwick Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 6SW (85p); **DEAD ELF**, Andrew Fisher, 2 The Limes, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AY (45p); **DEMON'S DRAWL**, Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Rd, Congleton, Cheshire (55p); **FIERY CROSS**, Tom Stacey, The Mill House, Rays Hill, Hawridge, Nr Chesham, Bucks HP5 2UJ (60p); **GREATEST HITS**, Pete Birks, 65 Turney Road, London SE21 7JB (50p); **THE GUILDER**, William Whyte, 10 Salamanca, Roebuck Rd, Dublin 14 (45p); **HOPSCOTCH**, Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts (50p); **IMAZINE**, Paul Mason, 16 Corncrake Close, Sutton Coldfield, W Midlands B72 1HY (50p); **INFINITY**, Russell Willis, 6 Shutler Rd, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1HD (50p); **JAWZ**, Alex Zbyslaw, 197 Herbert Ave, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 4HR (35p); **LANKHMAR STAR DAILY**, Robert Nott, 158 Pendeen Park, Helston, Cornwall (85p); **MAD POLICY**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG (45p); **MANIC DEPRESSIVE**, Nick Edwards, Cherry Lea, Wells Rd, Dundry, Bristol, Avon BS18 8NE (55p); **MYSTIC CRYSTAL**, Jason Kingsley, 72 Main St, Osgathorpe, Leics LE12 9TA (75p); **NMR!**, Brian Creese, 256 Canbury Park Road, Kingston on Thames, Surrey KT2 6LG (45p); **OBSCURITY INC**, A Keen, Kitchener House, 6 Gordon Terrace, Edinburgh EH16 5QH (60p); **PRISONERS OF WAR**, Wallace Nicoll, 228 Kinell Ave, Cardonald, Glasgow G52 3RU (60p); **PROTOPLASM**, 20 Victoria Rd, Rathgar, Dublin 6 (?); **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, Trevor Mendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1PH (5 for £1); **SWANSEA WITH ME**, Matt Williams, 24 Moor St, Coventry CV6 6EQ (40p); **TAKE THAT YOU FIEND**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Avenue, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 1JG (35p); **VIENNA**, Richard Egan, 64 Rookery Rd, Knowle, Bristol BS4 2DT (40p); **WARGAME NEWS**, Emjay, 17 Langbank Ave, Rise Park, Nottingham (£4.50 for 6)

The Space Where The Amateur Press Tell The Professionals Where They're Going Wrong

SOAPBOX

This month's contributor: PAUL MASON, editor of IMAZINE

FUN AND GAMES

Picture the scene: two gamers, Chris and Dave, are arguing in the bar at GamesFair.

Dave: '....but AD&D is completely muddled up. The rules are sprawling, inconsistent — a complete mess. There's not a scrap of realism or logic in the whole lot!"

Chris: 'Rubbish! It works well in practice, which is what counts. Anyway, who need realism? This is a fantasy game we're playing, remember? If you had your way we'd all be playing peasants in the Dol-de-Bretagne, a small town in northern France, on November 17th 1342. What fun that would be to roleplay! Get up in the morning, eat some gruel, dig in the fields, eat some more gruel, go to bed, get up next morning, etc....'

Dave: 'You're just exaggerating. AD&D is Tolkien meets Dallas....'

Chris: 'The rules don't matter — it's the DM's imagination that makes the game.'

Dave: 'Then why is it that all AD&D worlds are completely interchangeable — no flavour, no character? It's just like Mills & Boon. I believe rolegaming should aspire to better things — the level of Dickens or Graham Greene.'

Chris: 'Pretentious, vous? It's only a game, mate, it's only a bit of escapist fun....'

This isn't an unusual conversation by any means. It typifies many that I've heard, even participated in. The two sides in the argument can be crudely characterised as the 'fun' lobby, and the 'serious' gamers. The argument has been raging for many, many years, and always seems to come down to the same few points. The 'fun' gamer points out that "when it comes down to it, everyone plays the game for fun", and cannot comprehend why the 'serious' gamer insists on churning out all this rubbish about "flaws in the AD&D system". The 'serious' despairs of the 'fun' gamer, dismissing him or her as the kind of person who thinks Beethoven is boring, and watches *Crossroads* sedulously.

Where does this rift come from, and can anything be done to heal it? My own opinion is that the argument is caused by 'projection', that is, assuming that other people believe and do things for the same reasons as you do. Hence the glib assertions that "everyone plays for fun", or "all AD&D players have no imagination".

Have a look around you at the mass of people who play roleplaying games. Some scheme ingeniously to amass as much power and wealth for their characters as they can, others behave unpredictably — seemingly purely on whim. Still others methodically attack anything they can. Here a player tries to bring one character to life with skilful use of mannerisms and language, there a player tries to unravel the secrets of the GM's world. To put all that down to a desire for 'fun' is surely the most narrow-minded view!

People play role-playing games for many different reasons. Try to think of exactly what *you* get out of rolegames. If you reflect on sessions you've enjoyed, you'll realise that the answer is far more than simple 'fun'. And if you consider that nobody else plays the game for exactly the same mix of reasons that you do, you'll realise why I say that claiming that the whole phenomenon of rolegames satisfies a need for amusement and jollity alone is stupidly simplistic. Of course, there **is** a lot of humour to be found in roleplaying games, but equally there is mystery, excitement, sadness — indeed a whole panoply of emotional experience.

A theory that occurred to me recently was that it is the difference in motives for gaming which give good roleplaying games their dramatic tension or 'edge'. If everyone is after the same thing, then the game is more likely to become predictable — resembling a boardgame in which, although you don't know exactly how someone will win, you do know the mechanics they will employ. This is probably a little too contentious, so I'll leave the idea and return to my main argument.

It seems sensible, having come out with all this theoretical stuff, to dirty my hands with a little practical experience. What do I mean by my assertions, and how do I think people should respond to them?

As an example, I present myself. At many conventions, and in many fanzines, I've taken the position of 'Dave' in the imaginary conversation which opened this article. And yet, in most games I strive for as much humour as I can possibly achieve, often making my characters objects of ridicule in one way or another. So, am I a 'serious' gamer, or a 'fun' gamer? The answer is, of course, neither. So why do I argue, as Dave, against games like AD&D? Simply, AD&D fails to meet **my** requirements for what a roleplaying game should be. I could hardly fail to notice, though, that it **does** meet the requirements of a large number of players.

Roleplaying games have the potential to be an important recreation, even an artform, well into the future. I don't consider this statement unduly pretentious, though no doubt many will. Rolegames are a participative, active recreation (as against the passivity of TV viewing), a creative recreation, a cerebral recreation, and (potentially at least) an individualistic recreation. What could be better for an age in which conformity and the suppression of individual expression are becoming increasingly common. Big Brother (or Sister for that matter) would not approve of roleplaying games, unless they were under his control. And how could Big Brother control something that has no recognisable *raison d'etre*, that is as individual as its players?

Before I get carried away (and some of you will feel that I should have been, long ago) I'd better return to the relatively simple manifesto from which the above ruminations developed. I believe that roleplayers should recognise that other players may not play the game for the same reasons that they themselves do, and should allow for this. As a corollary to this, I should point out the dangers of allowing game companies to flood the market with products that emphasise only one of the many styles of rolegaming. As Mike Lewis noted in the #21 **Soapbox**, this can only lead to stagnation, and the loss of rolegaming's greatest asset — its individualism.

Paul Mason

Don't wait any longer – get *more* FLAGSHIP for *less* money . .

JOIN THE FLAGSHIP BREAKTHROUGH!

HAVE you thought about taking the PBM challenge? PBM (Play by Mail) fantasy and science fiction games are booming as never before.

PBM games pit you against the top British and international role-players. In KEYS OF BLED, you lead your people through the carnage of civil war and the threat of alien hazards on an unknown world. In TRIBES OF CRANE you bind the success of your tribe to the fortunes of the myriad secret factions struggling for power. In CRASIMOFF'S WORLD you make your bid for fame as the gods themselves vie for dominance. With full-time gamemasters backed by computers, the postal role-playing adventures are an experience you shouldn't miss.

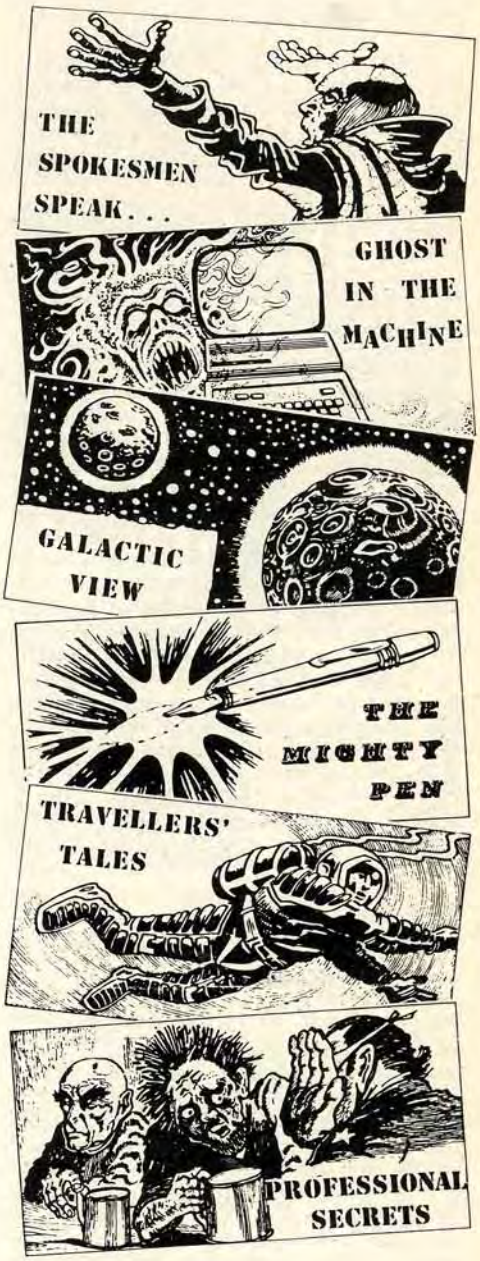
FLAGSHIP is the magazine of PBM adventure gaming. When we started in 1983, we had just 28 pages. Since then, we've matched the explosive growth of the hobby and issue 4 broke through our 40-page target, with 44 pages of reviews, illustrations, strategic advice, gamemaster commentaries, humour, fiction and stop-press news of Britain's latest fantasy role-playing game. And we now have discounts for nearly *every* British postal game, including Crasimoff's World, Feudal Lords, Galactic Conquest, Keys of Bled, Starglobe, Starmaster, Starweb, Tribes of Crane, Universe II and Vorcon Wars.

And there are more changes to come. From issue 5 we're changing our full-colour cover, and we're planning a new cover every issue from then on. We're commissioning extensive, deep analysis of play in the established British games to give our readers a decisive edge in their battles. Our free small-ad section is booming, with reader alliances forming in many of the major campaigns.

Is all this leading up to a change in price? Well, yes – but we're doing so well that we can afford to bring the price *down!* – to encourage new readers and work towards the day when every active player takes a FLAGSHIP subscription as a matter of course. From issue 5, four issues will only cost £5, making each issue cheaper than most turn fees! If you start 3–4 games a year with our discount coupons, the magazine will actually work out entirely free!

And our guarantee to subscribers is still in force: if you're disappointed, we'll refund the whole unused sub to you (minus the cost of the issues already sent). Perhaps it says something about FLAGSHIP that nobody has *ever* taken us up on this!

If you've yet to try the challenge of PBM gaming, don't wait any longer. Join the FLAGSHIP breakthrough, and let us add a whole new dimension to your adventures.



Send me 4 issues of FLAGSHIP from issue 4. I understand that, if I'm disappointed, I can write to cancel my subscription and get the unused money back. I enclose £5.

Name .....

Address (please print) .....

.....

..... Post code .....

Send this form to FLAGSHIP, P.O. Box 12, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0TJ

Please mention IMAGINE magazine when replying to advertisements

PHALANX

by R. Grenville-Evans

CHUNK the EIGHTH: "WITHIN LESS THAN AN INCH."

SO FAR, DURING THEIR STAY IN THE VILLAGE, WEASEL THE FAIRLY CLEVER AND OGRYN THE BIG HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY ONE LARGE DRAGON, BEDAZZLED BY A GIRL CALLED MOURLA, MYSTIFIED BY A MYSTIC CALLED OTHRUNU AND MADE TO FEEL UNEASY BY A "HOLY MAN" CALLED BANSHURGA DANASKMI... NOW THE DRAGON HAS RETURNED, BUT MOURLA HAS DISAPPEARED INTO THIN AIR...

WE'VE BEEN HAD! THERE IS NO SWORD, JUST A DIRTY GREAT DRAGON! WHERE ARE YOU? WEASEL! MOURLA!!
OVER HERE... WE'VE BEEN HAD ALL RIGHT!
I UNTIED HER - AND SHE VANISHED IN A SHIMMER OF BRILLIANT LIGHT...
...JUST AS THE DRAGON APPEARED? YOU... YOU DON'T THINK SHE...
YES! MOURLA IS SOME SORT OF EVIL WITCH - SHE IS THAT THING OUT THERE!
IN CASE SHE WAS LYING, AND THAT'S HER UP THERE - I'LL SAY GOODBYE OLD PAL - AND I HOPE YOU END UP IN A BETTER WORLD!

THEN BANSHURGA WAS TRYING TO WARN US! COME ON, WE MUST EVACUATE THE VILLAGE...
WEAS - I THINK THAT MONSTER IS GETTING READY TO FRY US FOR ITS SUPPER!
LOOK! IN THE WELL-BUCKET!!

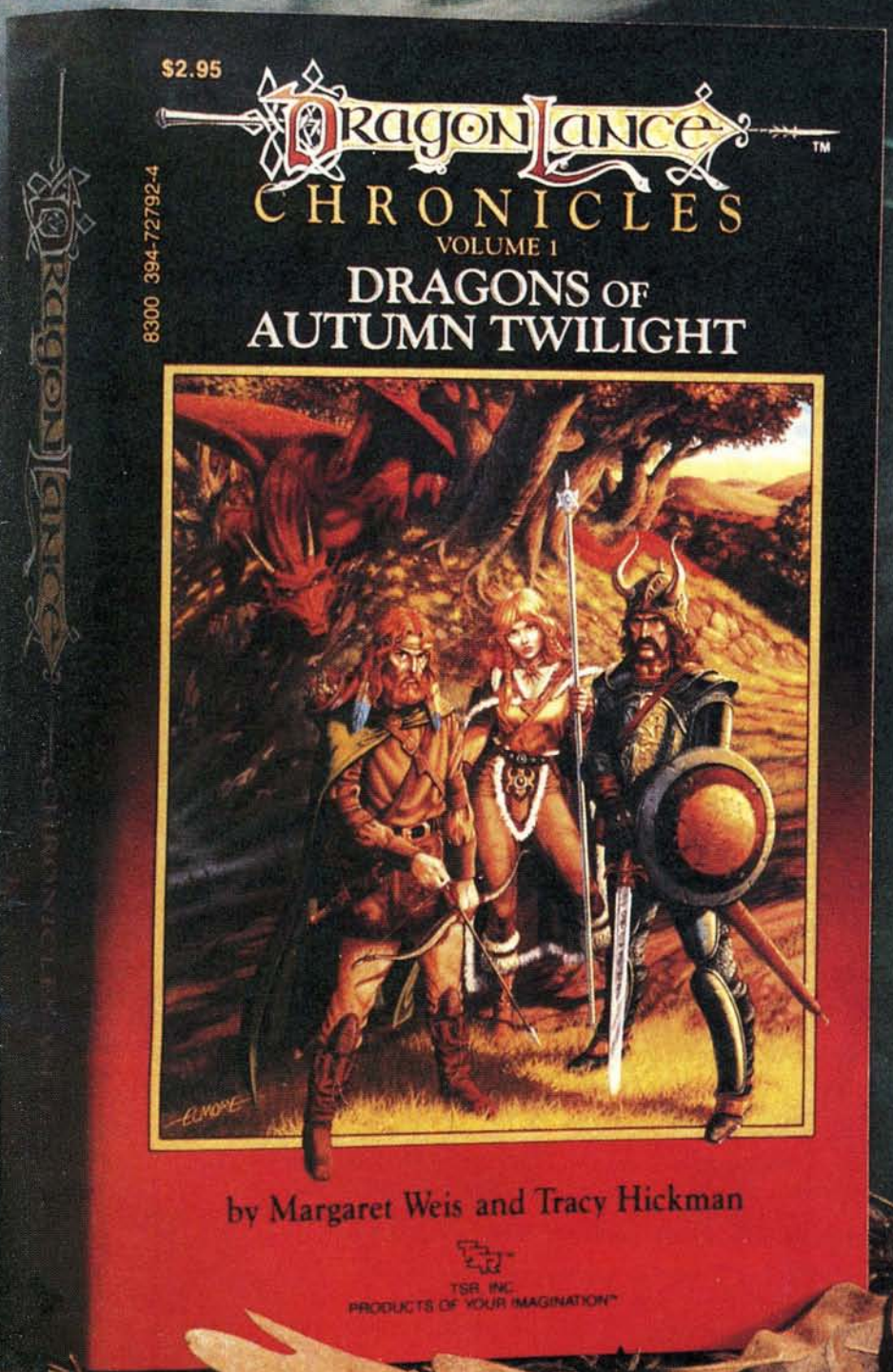
IT WASN'T THERE WHEN I LOOKED JUST NOW, WEAS - I SWEAR!
MOURLA SAID IT WOULD PROTECT US - SHE MAY HAVE BEEN LYING, BUT IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE! GRAB IT!

WH-WHERE DID WE GO TO JUST THEN?
I DON'T KNOW - BUT WE SEEM TO HAVE COME BACK TO BROAD DAYLIGHT!
P'RHAPS THIS IS THAT "BETTER WORLD"...
I DON'T THINK SO - LOOK!

LISTEN, SONNY, HOW DID YOU KNOW OUR NAMES? WHAT IS THIS PLACE -- AND WHO ARE YOU WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME, ANYWAY?
FROM WITHIN YOUR OWN HOME YE BE LESS THAN AN INCH! AS FOR ME- I'M A WONDERUL FELLA CALLED STYNCH!
I'LL BE YER GUIDE SO LONG AS YE LINGER AND FORGIVE ME IF
GIDDUDAVIT! OGRYN, DON'T GIVE CREDENCE TO ANYTHING -- IT'S ALL A TRICK!
FRAP
OOOWGH!
I HOPE WE DON'T MEET THE KID WHO OWNS THOSE PUPPETS!
JUST KEEP MOVING AND DON'T STARE AT ANYTHING!
YOU MUST PAY IF YE WOULD WRONG THE WISE OLD KEEPER OF THE GONG! (GROAN...)
DON'T LOOK AT IT! WHO- OR WHATEVER IS PULLING THIS GAME MUST NOT FOOL US, OR WE'VE HAD IT!
BUT...
BY THE GAP WHERE MY DAD'S MIDDLE TOE WAS! A MERMAID! A REAL ONE!!
OGRYN, COME AWAY... SHE'S AN ILLUSION -- IT'S TRICKERY, I TELL YOU!
THEN IS THAT AN ILLUSION?
AND IF WE IGNORE THEM, WILL THEY REALLY GO AWAY?
AAAH!!
WHO ARE YOU? PLEASE, YOU MUST FREE ME... AND TAKE ME BACK SO THAT I CAN FIGHT THE VILE BEAST TO THE END!
UHK!
ARE WEASEL AND OGRYN DESTINED TO DIE EVEN MORE ABSURDLY THAN THEY LIVE? WILL THEY NEVER KNOW WHO IS PULLING THE STRINGS?

56 Printed by TAVISTOCK PRESS (BEDFORD) LTD., Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7PG. Telephone: (0234) 58517. ISSN 0264-1399

EXPERIENCE A LEGEND IN TSR'S FIRST AD&D™ FANTASY NOVEL!



Dragons, creatures of legend. Krynn, a world of fantasy. DRAGONLANCE™ CHRONICLES, the epic quest of a small band of heroes comes alive in TSR's first full-length AD&D™ fantasy novel.

You've played the game. Now read the novel. Finally, available.

Ask for DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT, the first volume in the epic trilogy, at your favorite hobby, book or toy store.

448 pages of fantasy adventure for only £2.25!

AD&D and DRAGONLANCE are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. 1984 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

GOLDEN HEROES
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF SUPER-HEROES
NEW!
... FROM GAMES WORKSHOP!
WHOOM!
SUPERVISORS
GOLDEN HEROES
SUPERVISORS BOOK
PLAYERS
GOLDEN HEROES
PLAYERS BOOK
AVAILABLE IN YOUR LOCAL GAMES STORE NOW!